

JUDAISM

Call It Sleep: Jewish, American, Modernist, Classic

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Jewish Studies in Northern California: A Symposium

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Poetry

Lillian Elkin, Richard Fein, Jay Ladin, Elaine Starkman

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YITZHAK RABIN

1922 - 1995

A Statement of Condolence from the American Jewish Congress to the People of Israel

On behalf of the national membership of the American Jewish Congress, we express our deepest grief at the tragic assassination of Yitzhak Rabin.

Yitzhak Rabin, one of Israel's most visionary leaders, gave his life for the cause of peace. We will do everything in our power to deny the assassin his ultimate goal — an end to the peace process and another generation of hatred and war in the Middle East.

A hero on the battlefield, Yitzhak Rabin dedicated his life to the protection and security of the people of Israel. A warrior when necessary, a leader always, and a peace-maker to the end, his absence will be profound.

The memory of Prime Minister Rabin's great actions in war and in peace will endure for as long as the Jewish people endure. His memory will forever be a blessing and an inspiration.

To Prime Minister Rabin's family, his wife Leah, his children and grandchildren, we express our most profound sense of loss, of grief, and of anger. May they be comforted among the mourners of Zion and Jerusalem.

PHIL BAUM
Executive Director

DAVID V. KAHN
President

Call It Sleep: *Jewish, American, Modernist, Classic*

HANA WIRTH-NESHER

*Henry Roth died one month before this essay went to press.
It is affectionately dedicated to his memory.*

IN 1966 HENRY ROTH PUBLISHED A STORY IN *THE NEW Yorker* entitled "The Surveyor." An American tourist is apprehended by the police in Seville for conducting surveying operations at a public thoroughfare without a permit and for suspiciously laying a wreath at the site later that day. "What is this surveying about?" asks the policeman before bringing him to the local precinct. "Well," answers the tourist, "I tried to locate a place of some sentimental value to myself."¹ A state attorney dismisses the charges when he suspects that the wreath marked the site where heretics found guilty by the Inquisition were burned to death, among them "relapsed *conversos*, those Catholics who secretly clung to their Judaic faith."² Startled to find that the state attorney shares this knowledge, the tourist turns interrogator, "Why is everyone ignorant of it but you?" "There may have been personal reasons," the Spaniard replies, and reveals that his family had the strange habit of lighting a candle on Friday night. Each insists on the personal, private nature of his knowledge; yet each shares a collective memory that sets him apart from the mainstream community. Where exactly is this place, this site of sentimental value not easily recognized by others? This is the question raised both by this story and by Roth's monumental novel, *Call It Sleep*.

In February of 1992, at the age of 86, Henry Roth completed the manuscript of a second book, nearly sixty years after the completion of *Call It Sleep*. Towering over his desk in his living room in Albuquerque, New Mexico, is a many times enlarged photograph of New York's Lower East Side at the turn of the century, and on his desk is a copy of the daily newspaper delivered to his door, *The Jerusalem Post*. The small wooden bookcase across from the desk holds dozens of copies of *Call It Sleep*, in a great many languages. The space of Roth's private world contains artifacts that point to worlds elsewhere: to a Yiddish world of New York's Jewish immigrant neighborhoods, now relegated to history—"Who would have believed," says

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Roth, "that I would have seen Yiddish disappear in one lifetime?";³ to a Hebrew world in Israel that has a hold on Roth's memory and imagination but is inaccessible to him as a means of communication; to a literary world where he is read internationally in translation as a representative Jewish, American, and modernist writer. Places and languages to which he has no access haunt and captivate him, just as they define the space inhabited by his character David Schearl in *Call It Sleep*.

The publication history of this remarkable novel is itself a dramatic story that uncannily plays out the motif of inaccessibility so evident in his fiction. Published in 1934, at the height of the Depression, the book was acclaimed as a great contribution to American literature. John Chamberlain in the *New York Times* wrote, "Mr. Roth has done for the East Side what James T. Farrell is doing for the Chicago Irish. . . . The final chapters in the book have been compared to the Nighttown episodes of Joyce's *Ulysses*; the comparison is apt."⁴ Edwin Seaver of the *New York Sun* called him "a brilliant disciple of James Joyce," and Alfred Hayes observed, "There has appeared in America no novel to rival the veracity of this childhood. It is as honest as Dreiser's *Dawn*, but far more sensitive. . . . It is as brilliant as Joyce's *Portrait of the Artist*, but with a wider scope, a richer emotion, a deeper realism."⁵ Kenneth Burke found in *Call It Sleep* the same pattern of magic traced by Frazer in *The Golden Bough*: "The great virtue of Roth's book, to my way of thinking, was in the fluent and civilized way in which he found, on our city streets, the new equivalents of the ancient jungle."⁶ In the Sunday *New York Herald Tribune Book Review*, Fred T. Marsh claimed that *Call It Sleep* was "the most compelling and moving, the most accurate and profound study of an American slum childhood that has yet appeared in this day. . . . Henry Roth has achieved the detachment and universality of the artist."⁷ And then, as Harold Ribalow noted, "*Call It Sleep* vanished, and so did its author."⁸

For almost twenty-five years the novel was out of print, passed from hand to hand among a cult of devoted readers who searched for battered copies of it in second-hand bookshops. Inaccessible, marginal, nearly forgotten, its revival is by now a legend in American literary history. For the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Phi Beta Kappa journal, the *American Scholar*, the editors ran a special feature entitled "The Most Neglected Books of the Past 25 Years." The only title to be mentioned more than once was *Call It Sleep*, cited by both Alfred Kazin and Leslie Fiedler. In Kazin's words, "if you imagine the patient sensibility of Wordsworth and the unselfconscious honesty of Dreiser brought to the shock of his [Roth's] environment upon the senses, you may have some inkling of the slowness, the patience and the strange inner serenity of this book—as of something won, very far deep within, against the conventional cruelties of modern city life."⁹ Fiedler was as lavish with his praise. "For sheer virtuosity, *Call It Sleep* is hard to best; no one has ever distilled such poetry and wit from the counterpoint between the maimed English and the subtle Yiddish of the immigrant. No one has reproduced so sensitively the terror of family life

in the imagination of a child caught between two cultures. To let another year go without reprinting it would be unforgivable.”¹⁰

The novel made a miraculous comeback. Harold Ribalow negotiated a reissue in 1960, with a critical introduction by Maxwell Geismar. Four years later Peter Mayer, who had been introduced to the out-of-print book by a New York cabby, used his tiny budget at Avon where he had just landed a publishing job to purchase the rights and reissue it in paperback. It sold a million copies. *Call It Sleep* became the first paperback edition of a work ever to be reviewed on the front page of *The New York Times Book Review*, where Irving Howe called it “one of the few genuinely distinguished novels written by a 20th-century American.”¹¹ A book that had become inaccessible except to a coterie of admirers was transformed overnight into more than a bestseller—“*Call It Sleep* has become a classic,” observed the novelist William Styron, “it’s embedded, a landmark in our literature.”¹²

The first accolades linked it either with high experimental modernism in the context of Joyce, Eliot, and Frazer or with the American naturalism of Dreiser and Farrell, as a powerful expose of slum life. The generation that attended its rebirth underscored these earlier judgments but also added another dimension to its reception—its Jewishness. Themselves the children of immigrants, Irving Howe, Leslie Fiedler, and Alfred Kazin were all moved by the novel as a document of cultural passage, the one that they had made from Eastern European Yiddish-speaking homes to the American university and the last stronghold of Protestant culture, the Department of English. Fiedler designated *Call It Sleep* a “specifically Jewish book, the best single book by a Jew about Jewishness written by an American certainly through the thirties and perhaps ever.”¹³ For Kazin it is “the most profound novel of Jewish life that I have ever read by an American.”¹⁴ Irving Howe acknowledged that while “structured according to the narrative strategies of modernism. . . . Henry Roth’s *Call It Sleep* draws its substance, the whole unfolding of socioethnic detail, from the Jewish immigrant experience.”¹⁵ A whole new generation of readers seized upon the book for its representativeness as Jewish-American literature.

The ever-increasing interest in *Call It Sleep* throughout the 1960s and 1970s coincided with a rise in ethnic studies, with the ideological shift from the melting pot to what we have come to call multiculturalism. Along with the book’s impeccable credentials as modernist masterpiece, it now acquired the added dimension of ethnic chronicle. As a new wave of university students two generations removed from immigration participated in a nationwide search for national roots beyond the Atlantic, *Call It Sleep* became a staple of Jewish literature and Jewish studies curricula.¹⁶

The life of the author of *Call It Sleep* is no less dramatic than the story of its reception. Roth was two when his parents immigrated to the United States from the Austro-Hungarian province of Galicia to join masses of Eastern European Jewish immigrants on New York’s Lower East Side. In 1914 the

family moved to Harlem, away from what he remembered as a homogenous protected Jewish environment, and he was suddenly “plunged into an Irish Catholic neighborhood.”¹⁷ By 1925 he was a student at City College reading English (and Irish) modernist literature while still living in his Yiddish-speaking Harlem home. Two years later he met Eda Lou Walton, a New York University literature instructor and poet who transformed his life by encouraging him to write. In her Greenwich Village apartment, over the next four years he composed *Call It Sleep* on university examination booklets, completing a whole booklet in pencil every day. She also introduced him to *Ulysses*, which she had smuggled into the country from France; reading Joyce taught Roth “that I could talk about urban squalor and develop it into a work of art.”¹⁸ But despite the security that saw him through the writing of a successful first novel, Roth was uneasy about his relationship with Walton and the Bohemian Village life that she represented. The comforts he had been enjoying as a young writer at a time when other artists and Americans generally were enduring the hunger and despair of the Depression years brought with them a guilty conscience. His growing commitment to Communism, moreover, made him acutely sensitive to the rebuke he received from the anonymous *New Masses* reviewer who bemoaned the fact that “so many young writers drawn from the proletariat can make no better use of their working class experience than as material for introspective, febrile novels.”¹⁹

In a futile attempt to integrate his moral and political commitments with his artistic ambitions, he embarked on a novel commissioned by Maxwell Perkins at Scribner’s about a midwestern factory worker, which he abandoned despite Perkins’ encouragement. What followed was Roth’s legendary writer’s block, a sixty-year-old spell of silence broken only in 1994 with the publication of *A Star Shines Over Mt. Morris Park* and *A Diving Rock on the Hudson*, the first two volumes of a multivolume autobiographical fiction entitled *Mercy of a Rude Stream*.²⁰ In those sixty years he worked as a precision-tool grinder, an attendant at a psychiatric hospital, a Latin tutor, and a waterfowl breeder on a farm that he and his wife, Muriel Parker, purchased in Maine. During the McCarthy years, he burned his journals and other literary papers that might have contained incriminating information about himself and his friends. When *Call It Sleep* was reissued by Avon in 1964, reporters flocked to his Maine farm seeking out the reclusive writer. They published photographs that fed the legend of a curmudgeon in the snow, a nonentity thrust into a literary limelight that he eyed with a mixture of humility and cynicism. Book sales enabled the Roths to sell their farm and retire to a mobile-home park in Albuquerque, where he began to work on *Mercy of a Rude Stream*, originally intended for posthumous publication.

From the Yiddish world of his parents’ home and of the Lower East Side, Roth became Americanized first through the slang of street urchins who taunted him for being Jewish and then through the cadences of English literature. The raw material for his novel is the world from which he felt that

he had escaped; the treatment of that material is a dazzling display of modernist techniques, gleaned from Joyce and Eliot among others. Roth admitted that he had begun the book as an autobiography but that it sprouted fictional possibilities that he first resisted and to which he eventually succumbed. Despite the indictment of the book by the reviewer in *The New Masses*, it is partly naturalistic, reproducing with excruciating detail the grit of the slum streets, the charred metal of the Statue of Liberty, the dialect of the immigrant poor, the foods, smells, and noises of the Lower East Side. Almost every reader has commented on the work's cacophony, or as Stephen Adams has aptly put it, "The Noisiest Novel Ever Written."²¹ But like the naturalism of Joyce, the sounds and objects in Roth's universe all have symbolic resonances. The coarse dialogues of bar talk, for example, take on symbolic dimensions, such as these remarks over poker. "Dere's a star fer yeh! Watch it! T'ree kings I god. Dey come on huzzbeck! Yee! Hee! Hee! Mary! Nawthin' to do but wait fer day light and go home. To a red cock crowin."²² Not only do sexual and Christian religious connotations merge in this discourse, but the speech also refers to Emma Lazarus' poem "The Crowing of the Red Cock," a survey of the persecution of Jews throughout Western civilization. These few words, then, drift away from their naturalistic environment to a textual play that signals both Christian and Jewish culture simultaneously, and that draws attention to itself as art.

The child protagonist David Schearl has been identified by readers as the young artist, Henry Roth, attempting to wend his way between the Scylla of his father's wrath and the Charybdis of the slum streets. Narrated almost exclusively from his perspective, it is an account of a child's gradual and dim awareness of his parents' ordeal as immigrants and of the dark history which dogs their attempts to begin a new life in the Goldene Medina, the Golden Land of America. The reader knows that both parents have been guilty of sins that have made them pariahs in the old country: the father for having been complicitous in patricide and the mother for having consummated her love for a Gentile who abandoned her. By transgressing the authority of the Father and of the community, they have been thrust into their marriage as a form of penance.

The shadow cast over this story is the father's suspicion that the child is not his, which motivates his callousness and the child's uncanny defense against an accusation of which he is ignorant: He fabricates an alternative past for himself, one in which his father is the Christian organist who signifies a romantic Gentile world that is both seductive and treacherous. Brutalized by his father and nurtured to the point of suffocation by his mother, David seeks a power greater than that of his parents for protection and solace. Inspired by the text of Isaiah read to him in his *heder* class and stunned by the sparks between the trolley car tracks, he thrusts his father's milk ladle into the cracks between the rails, nearly causing his own electrocution. He survives, buoyed up by the crowds of immigrants who witness his near death, to see his Thor-

like father chastened and resigned to his paternity precisely when the child appears to have freed himself from its stranglehold. His biological paternity palls beside the suggestion that the young man has been reborn as an American who can assume an English voice and a Gentile past. This is the covenant of America. Or so it seems.

The internal struggle for self-definition is enacted in the novel as a *kulturkampf*, a battleground of languages. Although the book is written in English, it is experienced by the reader as if it were a translation, for David's main actions and thoughts are experienced in Yiddish. Yet this "original" source language is almost entirely absent, occasionally reproduced in transliteration or alluded to as the language of dialogue. Throughout the work David is in the process of constructing a self out of the languages that make up his world. First and foremost there is Yiddish, the language of home and the mother tongue, associated with his own nurturing mother and the Yiddish neighborhood of the Lower East Side. The formidable rival to that language is English, represented in the novel by the street lingo of immigrant dialects but also by the self-consciously literary passages that testify to the presence of a mind schooled in Anglo-American civilization. Also looming as a powerful linguistic force in the book is Hebrew, counterpoint to the mother tongue as it represents the Law of the Father in the words of the biblical prophets and the liturgy of Jewish ceremony. Hebrew and its partner in ritual, Aramaic, function in the novel as the repository of the Divine, associated with paternal power. The role of Polish is strangely a silent mirror image of English, for it is an inaccessible language for David, the vehicle for conveying secrets between adults that contain within them the key to his parents' past and to the circumstances of his own origins. He can overhear his mother and aunt conversing in Polish about his mother's girlhood and the Old Country, but he can only guess at the meaning, and those guesses are born of his own desires. Polish is as inaccessible to David and to the reader as English is inaccessible to his mother. In each case, it is a language of assimilation into a majority non-Jewish culture, away from Yiddish, which was central to Eastern European Jewish life and marginal in both Poland and America.²³

David's consciousness is divided among these languages, and the competing claims for his allegiance emerge from Henry Roth's location at the nexus of competing cultures. At first the polarities seem self-evident: Hebrew, Aramaic, and Yiddish function as Jewish languages and English and Polish as gentile ones. The ability to understand a language is not always commensurate with the power that it wields over its listeners. Hebrew, despite its being a "foreign" language for David, is the unchallenged "home" language as the holy tongue uniting Jews historically and geographically. Furthermore, Hebrew and Aramaic are linked to texts, namely the Book of Isaiah and the Passover Haggadah recounting the story of the Exodus from Egypt, the liberation from slavery, that signify Jewish civilization, whereas intertextual references in English are drawn from nursery rhymes, folklore, and secular literature. It

might seem that this is a novel that charts the course of assimilation from a clearly defined ethnic parent culture to a clearly recognizable Anglo-American identity, from the mother tongue Yiddish and the father tongue Hebrew to the adopted tongue, English. But it is not that simple.

Yiddish is associated with his mother, but it is the language of the father as well. And although Hebrew signifies the language of Judaism and thus serves to reinforce his ties to his family, it is represented in a King James translation, evoking Christian Western culture as much as it does Jewish civilization. In fact, the passage from Isaiah that Roth cites is read in Christian hermeneutics as a prophecy of the coming of Christ, just as the Chad Godya song with its link to the sacrificial lamb and the Passover seder, signifies both Jewish and Christian traditions. Furthermore, the lyrical and symbolic resonances of the biblical text, with its metaphorical angel coal in contrast to the literal coal of his cellar, captivate David's imagination and mark a turning point in his movement away from his parents and toward his development as an artist. The Book of Isaiah functions, therefore, as both a movement toward and away from his Jewish heritage. Aramaic serves as yet another instance of how tidy oppositions of Jewish and Gentile worlds are challenged by this novel. In one sense, the Aramaic stanzas from the Chad Godya, by virtue of their being embedded in a Jewish ritual, have become Judaized through context. But Aramaic was an official language in the Persian Empire and served to some extent as a *lingua franca* among peoples, much as English has functioned in this century. Aramaic is also an important influence as a second language in the Bible. What may serve in this novel as an authentic Jewish medium is also a classic example of the bilingualism and biculturalism that has characterized Jewish civilization over the ages.²⁴

As an immigrant writer who made the dramatic journey from a Yiddish tenement home to a Greenwich Village literary world, Roth himself is situated between languages. Bound to Yiddish emotionally, he is also estranged from it intellectually, having never achieved genuine literacy in that language and having never read Yiddish literature. Yet despite mastery of and inventiveness in his nearly native English, he is estranged from it emotionally, for it has remained in his mind the repository of the Christian world. Evident in Roth's novel is not only the importance of language in the construction of David's self, but also the unstable referent of the different languages that make up his world. The non-English and therefore "ethnic" components of his identity spring not from inherent characteristics, but arise interactively, in the context of the other culture. To discuss *Call It Sleep* as an ethnic novel can be constructive, then, if we discard the notion that ethnicity provides an essential and stable identity in confrontation with a monolithic mainstream culture. Instead, ethnicity itself may be a type of invention, as Werner Sollors has argued so persuasively in his studies on ethnicity in American culture.²⁵

David Schearl's Jewish identity may be comprised of pre-given texts, languages, and rituals from Jewish tradition and culture, but it is activated by its

dialogue with aspects of American culture in a given time and place. His hybrid Jewish-American identity, therefore, is forged in the clash of languages and dialects coursing through his consciousness in the book's climactic chapters. It is located in an in-between zone, interstices that are both Henry Roth's individual artistic space and the communal space of a particular generation in Jewish-American culture. "He might as well call it sleep," the evocative opening sentence of the book's last paragraph, moves into another indeterminate space, between waking and sleeping, that signifies the indeterminate cultural spaces David inhabits so uneasily. The long series of synecdoches that follows intensifies the problem of representativeness that is the novel's signature.

... the perpetual blur of shod and running feet, the broken shoes, new shoes, stubby, pointed, caked, polished, bunions, pavement-beveled, lumpish, under skirts, under trousers, shoes, over one and through one, and feel them all and feel, not pain, not terror, but strangest triumph, strangest acquiescence. One might as well call it sleep. He shut his eyes.²⁶

Each shoe is a tangible particular in his world. Yet each shoe is also a part representing the whole person, and a part representing a category of people, the wearers of caked or polished shoes. David's reverie emphasizes types, groups, collective identities, but at the same time it is the urban child's equivalent of counting sheep before nodding, a silent display of the masses that comprise his world. By shifting into "*one* [my emphasis] might as well call it sleep" in the last sentence, Roth foregrounds the issue of representativeness, since "one" is both a general term uniting author, readers, and characters, and a reference to David's individual consciousness in a form of free indirect discourse. Who speaks for whom in "One might as well call it sleep"? Who is doing the calling? David acquiesces to the existing world that has been named before him, and David also triumphs; he names his state by calling it sleep. Roth has located David in a trancelike state where he both invents his identity through naming and bows to the categories that precede him.

Like Stephen Daedalus, whose name is derived from conflicting cultures, David Schearl's name is oxymoronic. In Hebrew *David* means beloved; in Yiddish *Schearl* means scissors. What the power of love restores for the child is rent again and again by the power of mind. And what the inheritance of generations provides, the act of immigration severs. Yiddish surnames historically have had the domesticating function of designating vocation or locale. Schearl may mean little more than livelihood from tailoring, humble origins. David, on the other hand, is a name that cannot contract into its etymological link to love alone, for it too has a historical dimension, the most beloved King of Israel, ancestor of the Messiah. To call him David Schearl is to make him representative in the most complex of ways. It is to draw attention to the very act of calling.

If *Call It Sleep* is the portrait of the writer as a boy, then the first two volumes of *Mercy of a Rude Stream* follow the development of the artist through

his teenage and university years. Young Ira is intoxicated by the magic and power of words:

And he passes below the hill on Mt. Morris Park in autumn twilight, with the evening star in the west in limpid sky above the wooden bell tower. And so beautiful it was: a rapture to behold. It set him a problem he never dreamed anyone set himself. How do you say it? Before the pale blue twilight left your eyes you had to say it, use words that said it: blue, indigo, blue, indigo. Words that matched, matched that swimming star above the hill and the tower; what words matched it? Lonely and swimming star above the hill. Not twinkling, nah, twinkle, twinkle, little star—those words belonged to someone else. You had to match it yourself. . . .

The intersecting languages and cultures that shape *Call It Sleep* are intensified in the later books. This is dramatically evident in the contrast between the title and the appendix. The former is a quotation from Shakespeare's *Henry VIII*, while the latter is a Glossary of Yiddish and Hebrew words and phrases. Young Ira would like to disappear into the pages of Christian literature, of "Jean Valjean and Huck Finn and D'Artagnan, and David Copperfield and Martin Eden." The writer recalls his younger self, "Oh, stories told you everything. . . . You were more in their world than in the Jewish world, in their world where you wanted to be,"²⁷ yet the older writer confides to his computer *Ecclesias* that "Instead of the Muse, I turn for inspiration and a sense of renewal to the Lower East Side."²⁸ To enter into the literary world of Henry Roth, the reader needs translations for hundreds of Yiddish words, from simple idioms, like *azoi?* and *bist meshugge* to cuisine such as *blintzes* and *borsh* to items of ritual, such as *havdallah* or *kharoses*. Just as Ira crosses cultural boundaries throughout his initiation into American culture, Roth's contemporary reader crosses boundaries when he turns the pages of *Mercy of a Rude Stream*. The dialogue between cultures is already evident before the first page, for Shakespeare's lines containing the phrase that gives the book its title appear as epigraph, but along with a commentary (as in the Talmud) with the author posing a question about Shakespeare's metaphor, and then distinguishing his own usage from that of "peerless Will." Although Shakespeare has lent the book its title, his language has also been appropriated, translated, and made to fit its new cultural milieu.

The crossing of boundaries becomes Ira Stigman's, and the dramatized aging narrator's, obsession. Whether he remains within the fold, where he crosses sexual boundaries, or whether he leaves the fold and crosses ethnic and cultural boundaries, he is always guilt-ridden. Yet out of that double bind which he poses in the most extreme form, pathological claustrophobia or defiant self-exile, Roth continues to spin his tales of places crosshatched by rude streams—of consciousness.

Call It Sleep and, more recently, *Mercy of A Rude Stream*, are attempts to define the cultural space implied by the tourist in his story "The Surveyor"

when he silently tried “to locate a place of some sentimental value to myself.” David the individual shares in the collective memory of more than one language, more than one people, more than one culture. And because each of these memories is itself dynamic, David can be representative of more than one group. David the Jewish-American child protagonist inhabits a book that has been hailed as the great representative work of Jewish-American literature. Yet *Call It Sleep* is a novel that challenges the very notion of typicality. This could be identified as the book’s central theme. To “call it sleep” is not to lay to rest the problem of ethnic and minority identity in America; it is to draw our attention to the act of calling as both recognition and invention, even in the moment of utmost weariness.

NOTES

1. Henry Roth, “The Surveyor,” *The New Yorker* (August 6, 1966). Reprinted in Irving Howe (ed.), *Jewish-American Stories* (New York: New American Library, 1977), p. 57.
2. Roth, “The Surveyor,” p. 64.
3. Unpublished interview with Hana Wirth-Nesher, February 1992.
4. Harold Ribalow, “The History of Henry Roth and *Call It Sleep*,” Introduction to *Call It Sleep* (Paterson, NJ: Pageant Books, 1960), p. xiii.
5. Ribalow, “The History of Henry Roth and *Call It Sleep*,” p. xiv.
6. Kenneth Burke, “More About Roth’s *Call It Sleep*,” *New Masses* 14 (February 26, 1935): 21.
7. Fred T. Marsh, “A Great Novel about Manhattan Boyhood,” *New York Herald Tribune (Books)* (17 February, 1935): 6.
8. Ribalow, p. xiv.
9. “The Most Neglected Books of the Past 25 Years,” *The American Scholar* 25 (Autumn 1956): 478.
10. “Neglected Books,” 486.
11. Irving Howe, “Life Never Let Up,” *The New York Times Book Review* 25 (October 1964): 1, 60–61.
12. Jonathan Rosen, “The 60-Year Itch,” *Vanity Fair* (February 1994): 22.
13. Leslie Fiedler, “The Jew in the American Novel,” *To The Gentiles* (New York: Stein and Day, 1972), p. 96.
14. Alfred Kazin, “Introduction” to *Call It Sleep* (New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1991), p. ix.
15. Irving Howe, *World of Our Fathers* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1976), p. 588.
16. In an attempt to explain the radiant urgency of writers such as Roth, Saul Bellow, Delmore Schwartz, and Bernard Malamud, Irving Howe noted that “a subculture finds its voice and its passion exactly at the moment that it approaches disintegration.” Howe, *World of Our Fathers*, p. 586.
17. Hana Wirth-Nesher, Interview with Henry Roth, February 1992.
18. Hana Wirth-Nesher, Interview with Henry Roth, February 1992.
19. Review of *Call It Sleep*, *New Masses* (February 12, 1935): 27.
20. Henry Roth, *Mercy of a Rude Stream*, Vol. I: *A Star Shines Over Mt. Morris Park* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1994); Vol. II, *A Diving Rock on the Hudson* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1995).
21. Stephen J. Adams, “The Noisiest Novel Ever Written: The Soundscape of Henry Roth’s *Call It Sleep*,” *Twentieth Century Literature* (Spring 1989): 43–64.

22. Henry Roth, *Call It Sleep* (New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux), pp. 418–19.

23. For a more detailed discussion of the function of multilingualism in the novel, see Hana Wirth-Nesher, “Between Mother Tongue and Native Language in *Call It Sleep*,” “Afterword” to the 1991 edition of *Call It Sleep*, pp. 443–62.

24. For a discussion of bilingualism in Jewish culture see Baal-Makhshoves, “One Literature in Two Languages,” in Hana Wirth-Nesher (ed.), *What is Jewish Literature?* (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society, 1994), pp. 69–78.

25. See Werner Sollors, *Beyond Ethnicity: Consent and Descent in American Culture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986) and Werner Sollors, ed. *The Invention of Ethnicity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989). The imagining and inventing of national identity that has been the subject of historians such as Hobsbawm and Anderson is clearly applicable to the forging of ethnic identities within America. See Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities* (London: Verso, 1983) and Eric Hobsbawm, *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992).

26. *Call It Sleep*, p. 441.

27. Roth, *Mercy of a Rude Stream*, I: 234.

28. *Ibid.*, II: 399.

RICHARD FEIN

A Yiddish Poet Translates His Poem in New York

Berlin makht iber (1943)

*Afn dil, kupes fun shikh un hor,
un ash afn stav fun Sobibor.*

Berlin recycles (1943)

On the floor, in piles, shoes, hair;
and ashes on the pond at Sobibor.

RICHARD FEIN's books include *Kafka's Ear* (which received the Maurice English Award), *At the Turkish Bath*, and *The Dance of Leah*. He is finishing a new book, *To Move into the House*. He lives in Cambridge, MA.

Crisis in the Scrollery: A Dying Consensus

A. I. BAUMGARTEN

THE IMPORTANCE OF SCHOLARLY CONSENSUS AS A means by which we orient ourselves in a realm of knowledge has been much emphasized in the past generation; recognition of its role in creating the framework that enables us to understand the world is now the prevailing view.¹ A challenge to an existing consensus, whether caused by new evidence or by new approaches to already available evidence, is therefore troubling and often heartily resisted. Some respond to that challenge by maintaining the old consensus unchanged while others may react by making greater or lesser changes to take account of the new perspective. A third possibility also exists: the new evidence may prompt some scholars to propose new ways of organizing knowledge on the subject, renouncing the old paradigm entirely in favor of some new one. Perhaps the best known of these paradigm shifts comes from the world of natural science, the challenge to Ptolemaic astronomy posed by the heliocentric theories of Copernicus.

These considerations are important in understanding the current state of Dead Sea Scroll studies. The Second Temple period (beginning with the return from the Babylonian exile in the sixth century B.C.E. until the destruction of the Temple by the Romans in 70 C.E.) was a determining era for Judaism. Crucial changes took place between the time of the Maccabean revolution in the second century B.C.E. and the end of the first century C.E., notably, the rise of Christianity and the emergence of the Pharisees as the dominant group in Jewish life. Yet our sources for these years are relatively few. Once we exhaust the events covered by the narrative of Maccabees I and II, we must rely on the historian Josephus. He tells us much of interest about this Jewish world of Palestine, about the Pharisees, Sadducees, and Essenes. He mentions John the Baptist and alludes to the early Christians, yet his narrative is only at the level of a secondary source. The New Testament fills in some details, but it consists of texts sacred to a group that ultimately parted from the Jewish people and were in conflict with much that was taking place in the Jewish world of its time.

Hence the significance of the Scrolls of the Judean desert, discovered, beginning in 1947, in caves near the shore of the Dead Sea, in the vicinity of the place known by the modern name of Qumran, and therefore usually called the Dead Sea Scrolls or the Qumran texts. Apparently securely dated by

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paleographic, archaeological, and radio carbon methods to the Second Temple period, these texts offer unparalleled insight into the Jewish world of that era. The Dead Sea Scrolls can help elucidate the transformations which took place in those decisive years. For example, they may be able to enlighten us concerning the place of the Pharisees at moments prior to their dominance. Such information is important, for victorious groups regularly rewrite their past, often claiming that they always occupied the place they only achieved later. For this reason the Dead Sea Scrolls are a subject of great popular interest, whether “at home” in the Shrine of the Book or the Rockefeller Museum in Jerusalem, “on the road,” as in the recent exhibition at major museums and libraries in the United States, or “on location” so to speak at Qumran, a regular stop on the itinerary of tourist groups.

Popular curiosity aside, a scholarly consensus on how to view these documents is essential, for without it we are in intellectual chaos. Without a consensus we cannot situate the Dead Sea documents in their time and place, and certainly cannot use them to provide a context within which to position other movements and their histories. A scholarly consensus on how to understand these documents is thus a crucial part of the intellectual framework in which to place definitive moments in the history of Judaism, as well as in the context in which Christianity was born. Challenges to an existing consensus concerning the Dead Sea Scrolls therefore have implications far beyond the narrow confines of Qumran studies.

Consensus Formation

The initial wave of publications of the Dead Sea Scrolls took place within a few years of the discovery. It included several works: the *Manual of Discipline* or *Community Rule* (1QS),² a set of regulations for the life of the group; the *Thanksgiving Hymns* (1QH), a series of poems thanking God for the life of a sectarian; commentaries on biblical prophets, such as *Pesher Habakkuk* (1QpHab); as well as biblical texts themselves, such as the Isaiah scrolls.³ Analysis of these works led to the establishment of a consensus that asserted three conclusions: (1) that these were the writings of a single group; (2) that group was the Essenes; and (3) that they arose in opposition to the Maccabees.

None of the scrolls were found at Qumran proper, which was excavated by DeVaux from 1951 to 1956,⁴ but only in nearby caves. Nevertheless Qumran—the site of a sectarian group—was posited as the central locus of *the* group responsible for all the scrolls, though from the earliest stages of the discussion it was clear that not *all* of the scrolls were sectarian: the first finds included biblical texts sacred to all Jews. Next, scholars concluded that the inhabitants of Qumran were the Essenes, known from Greek and Latin authors—both Jewish and non-Jewish, such as Philo, Josephus, and Pliny the Elder—who lived as celibate communities of males, with common meals and a common purse.⁵ Furthermore, this group was believed to have had important links to the

Sadoqite priesthood, which had ruled in the Jerusalem Temple, supposedly from the days of King David onward, until they were displaced by the Maccabees in the middle of the second century B.C.E. The principal cause of the emergence of the Dead Sea Scroll group was posited to be the dissatisfaction of Sadoqite priests with their loss of power.⁶ This last conclusion was given definitive form by F. M. Cross Jr., in a paper delivered at a symposium in March 1966, and later published in the collection *New Directions in Biblical Archeology*, edited by D. Freedman and J. Greenfield. Cross celebrated the consolidation of “coherent patterns of fact and meaning”⁷ in Qumran studies: “the ancient Zadokite house gave way to the lusty, if illegitimate Hasmonean dynasty. Essene origins are to be discovered precisely in the struggle between those priestly houses and their adherents.”⁸ In defeat, according to Cross, the Essenes withdrew, forming their own community in exile at Qumran, led by a counter-priesthood, opposed to all the evil ways of the usurpers.⁹

An important place in this scheme was filled by the role assigned to the “wicked priest.” This figure, an enemy of the Qumran community, as is obvious from his name, played a significant part in texts such as *Pesher Habakkuk*. While there was to be vigorous debate concerning his precise identity, the conclusion that he was one of the Hasmonean rulers was widely shared.¹⁰ Consideration of the role of the “wicked priest” thus reinforced conclusions drawn on the basis of other evidence: the identity of the “wicked priest” proved that the community at Qumran was implacably opposed to the dynasty of the Maccabees; understanding their origins as a result of that hostility was thus further strengthened. While there were dissenters from this consensus, some of the latter were dismissed as cranks,¹¹ while others were simply overlooked,¹² a usual fate awaiting those who do not accept the common view.

The wave of publication of texts that began with the Temple Scroll in 1977 and has continued (too slowly at times) into the present, has brought new sources to the attention of the scholarly community. In the process, a significant challenge to the old consensus has emerged, producing a crisis in the scrollery. Each of the challenges has come independently. Each attacked some other aspect of the old consensus, and each weakened that consensus in some way. The cumulative effect has been devastating. As I have discussed the nature of the relationship between Qumran and the Essenes at length elsewhere,¹³ I will focus here on the demise of the old consensus concerning the first and third points above—the unity of the Qumran library, its origin in the writings of a single group, and the nature of the relationship between the Qumran community and the Maccabees.

Doubts Accumulate and Multiply

The first significant doubts arose while the consensus that was to emerge was still not complete, as early as 1952, at the time of the discovery of the *Copper*

Scroll, a list of Temple treasures buried in the caves of the desert. That text seemed to come from Temple circles, a world very different from that of other Qumran sectarian documents such as the *Manual of Discipline*. What did that source therefore mean for the nature of the works discovered in the caves, as a whole? Could scholars continue to consider them as the products of *one* group that lived at the site uncovered by the excavations? Was only one group burying works in caves, or might many different hands have secreted the texts discovered in modern times? The difficulty posed by the *Copper Scroll* was resolved to the satisfaction of most scholars of those days by the conclusion that the *Copper Scroll* was the product of sheer imagination, thus enabling the old conclusion that all the scrolls discovered were the works of one group to continue to dominate.¹⁴

Questions, however, intensified with publication of the *Temple Scroll* (in 1977), a first-person account dictated by God to Moses, containing a revision of biblical law, including a detailed description of the Temple to be built.¹⁵ What did the *Temple Scroll* indicate concerning the nature of the Qumran library? Was that library a coherent and consistent whole, or a collection of writings of various origin and outlook? In particular, what was the relationship of the *Temple Scroll* to other works found in the caves surrounding the settlement? The opening salvo in this attack was fired by B. Levine, and he was soon joined by numerous others.¹⁶ Scholars began to posit the existence of a periphery around the Qumran community consisting of groups prior to or contemporary with the settlement at Qumran. Some of our sources came not from Qumran proper, they argued, but from that periphery.

Eventually, the notion that not all works were sectarian, in the strict sense of the word, became widely discussed and accepted. One of the first questions scholars now had to ask themselves in evaluating the place of a work from Qumran was whether that work was sectarian, or part of the periphery of texts (now known to have been quite wide) to be found there. The idea that all the works found in the caves surrounding Qumran originated with *one* group was now effectively abandoned. These conceptions also enabled new theories concerning Qumran origins to arise. These theories were to be based on reconstructions of the relationship between Qumran and groups in its periphery, established as a result of the analysis of the connection between works in the Qumran periphery and sectarian Qumran sources in the strictest sense of the word. At least some of these theories of Qumran origins suggested trajectories in which disgruntled Sadoqite priests played no part.¹⁷

A substantial delay in publication of further texts ensued in the aftermath of the appearance of the *Temple Scroll*. A central part in that delay was played by the *halakhic* letter known as 4QMMT, which was supposed to have been published by 1985, but did not actually appear formally until 1994.¹⁸ The reasons for that delay and the resultant public scandal are perhaps too well known to require comment, but the role of H. Shanks and of his journal *Biblical*

Archaeology Review as a gadfly in contributing to an environment in which delay was no longer possible cannot be overlooked. One explanation of that delay, however, has been suggested by Golb and it deserves mention.¹⁹ Perhaps scholars were reluctant to publish their texts because they were aware that these new sources posed a dilemma to the established consensus, to which they themselves were loyal. Not sure what to make of the new writings, realizing that they might overturn their own views, scholars simply stalled, hoping that something would emerge that would clarify the significance of these scrolls, while leaving the consensus intact. Hence the delay. Whether Golb's suggestion is correct or not, when the logjam of unpublished texts began to break, in the early 1990s, virtually every new source to appear posed a difficulty of one sort or other to the established consensus.

The first inkling of the new round of difficulties, even if not analyzed in any depth at the time, was an observation made by G. Vermes. The "sons of Sadoq the priests" occupy an important place in texts such as the *Manual of Discipline* and the *Damascus Document*=CD (a work of the Qumran type known first from the Cairo Genizah, and now from additional manuscripts from Cave Four at Qumran).²⁰ Their prominence in these sources would seem to confirm the hypothesis that priests belonging to (or at the very least loyal to) the Sadoqite line played a distinctive role in the formation of the Qumran community, as posited by the consensus view. That conclusion, however, was now called into question by the Cave Four fragments of the *Manual of Discipline* discussed by Vermes.²¹ In the crucial places where one would expect to find mention of the "sons of Sadoq the priests," based upon our knowledge of the text from 1QS, they were missing in the earlier fragments of the source now becoming known from Cave Four. An uncomfortable question thus had to be asked: if the "sons of Sadoq the priests" really occupied a crucial role in the origins of the sect as the original consensus asserted, how could they possibly not be present in the earliest manuscripts of the *Manual of Discipline*? Doesn't their later insertion into the *Manual of Discipline* support the conclusion that Sadoqite lineage did *not* play a critical role in Qumran origins? Vermes' evidence would seem to support the conclusion, already suggested by some, that the Sadoqite phase at Qumran was an interlude, which took place *sometime after the formation* of the group, and was not foundational, as posited by the original consensus.²² Perhaps the Sadoqite connection was nothing more than a fiction, congenial to be argued at some stage in the group's life, rather than history. If that were the case, it would not be the first example of a fiction created to fill a need at some moment in a group's experience.²³ These are but a few of the possibilities opened by the manuscripts analyzed by Vermes. When Vermes published his article, however, none of these possibilities was made explicit: he merely noted the readings of the Cave Four manuscripts of the *Manual of Discipline*, the differences between them and that of 1QS, without discussing any of the possible consequences of these facts for theories of Qumran origins.

The next problem to emerge was of a different sort, one that could not possibly be overlooked. With the publication of 4Q448,²⁴ the “Prayer for the Welfare of King Jonathan,” the easy conclusion of Qumran opposition to the Maccabees was in serious difficulty. How was it conceivable that the members of this sect prayed for the welfare of King Jonathan the Maccabee? What was this scrap doing in the Qumran library? How could its being found there possibly be reconciled with the usual view of Qumran origins, particularly as Jonathan was another name for Alexander Jannaeus, one of the leading candidates for the role of wicked priest? A number of answers to this question would be suggested, many of which have a desperate tone, with the insistence of their authors clearly audible: Please do not force us to change views we and many other scholars have held for years!

Thus one set of scholars suggested a conclusion, very difficult to sustain on the basis of the text, that this prayer was not really one for the welfare of Jonathan, but a curse directed against his rule.²⁵ Another scholar began by arguing (on the basis of other Qumran texts) that Jonathan, that is, Alexander Jannaeus (ruler from 103–76 B.C.E.), was not in fact a favorite of the Qumran group. Nevertheless, he proposed, the “Prayer for King Jonathan” did not require us to change our view of the place of Jonathan=Alexander Jannaeus in the eyes of the sect. The “Prayer for King Jonathan” also contained a section from the extra-canonical psalm 154, and such works, this scholar argued, were much beloved of Qumran members. Hence they preserved 4Q448, without really paying attention to its contents as a whole, disregarding the prayer for Jonathan’s welfare (which would not have been to their liking).²⁶ To what lengths will lovers of literature not go! Even more extreme is the view reported to me orally by Hanan Eshel, as having been suggested to him. The “Prayer for King Jonathan” is admittedly difficult to read, its decipherment a triumph of skill and determination of the paleographers. Perhaps, it was indicated to Hanan Eshel, the Qumran sectarians found it equally difficult to read, hence they preserved it without quite realizing its contents, and the difficulty this text would pose to accepted theories thousands of years later. If only the Qumran librarians had been better at reading poorly written texts they might have discarded this scrap, and thus saved scholars the need to reconsider long accepted conclusions.

All this might have been disregarded as the difficulty posed by an isolated problematic text. But reasons to doubt the conventional view continued to mount. To take one example, the *halakhic* letter known as 4QMMT, much discussed even before its recent official publication, was apparently a foundational document of the community, whose numerous copies indicated its status. Based on the existing consensus, we should expect the “priests sons of Sadoq” to play a dominant role there, and the Qumran sect’s hatred of the Hasmoneans to be prominent. Neither is the case. The “priests sons of Sadoq” are never mentioned in 4QMMT, and the letter was apparently sent to a Hasmonean ruler, who was viewed with favor by its author. That ruler has the

promise of justification in God's eyes, in anticipation of the end of Days, held out before him, should he but choose to follow the advice of the author. All he need do is accept the sect's understanding of biblical law and act accordingly.²⁷ How can this favorable attitude towards a Hasmonean leader possibly fit with the consensus view that posits an unbreachable gap between the Qumran community and the national leadership?

These texts oblige us to return to a point made virtually thirty years ago by J. Liver. In an article assessing the place of Sadoqite priests at Qumran, Liver noted that the usual view of the role of the Sadoqites could not possibly be correct. The "wicked priest," Liver noted, was described as having been "called in the name of truth when he arose (*Pesher Habakkuk* viii, 9)." The wicked priest did not begin as an enemy of the truth: his origins and first actions were good.²⁸ This conclusion, which did not fit the consensus view of Qumran origins, was largely overlooked at the time, the usual fate awaiting those who dare propose conclusions not in accord with the reigning politically correct view of their day. Yet today, in the light of the new evidence from recently published texts, it seems clear that Liver was correct. If the "wicked priest" was some ruler of the Hasmonean dynasty, the members of the Qumran sect thought well of him at the outset. This favorable attitude towards the Hasmoneans displayed in *Pesher Habakkuk* is now confirmed by a number of other sources. How can we still accept a theory of Qumran origins that argues that lack of acceptance of the legitimacy of the Maccabees on the part of people who felt that they had been deposed by that family, is at the foundations of the Qumran sect?

Other Challenges

The cumulative effect of these independent challenges to received wisdom is devastating. Simultaneously, another line of analysis of the Qumran texts was to combine with these considerations so as to make the consensus view even less convincing. Based on the Jewish-Christian debate of that time, in which the crucial issue was once perceived to be the difference in beliefs concerning the identity of the messiah, scholars assumed that to be the seedbed of sectarian self-definition. Hence they looked to diverging messianic scenarios as a primary cause for the emergence of different groups. This situation prevailed until the late 1950s, when Morton Smith pointed out that Qumran and other bodies of evidence made it evident that one group could hold a variety of messianic beliefs, without being troubled by that situation.²⁹ If one group could hold a number of views, differences in messianic expectation, Smith concluded, could not have been the seedbed of sectarian self-definition. That role, Smith argued, was to be reserved for the *halakha*. Disagree over the law, he suggested, and one has the makings for the rise of a new group.³⁰

Evidence as published over the years made Smith's perspective seem particularly convincing. This was especially the case when word began to circulate concerning 4QMMT, the *halakhic* letter from Qumran mentioned

earlier, which explained the separation of the sect from other Jews as a consequence of disagreement over the calendar and twenty or so additional points of law. At the same time the identity of the Qumran sect became increasingly muddled. Some points of Qumran *halakha*, upon closer analysis, turned out to share positions with the law attributed by the Rabbis to the Sadducees.³¹ Yet Qumran Sabbath law, as had already been argued by L. Ginzberg at the beginning of the century on the basis of the *Damascus Document*, was remarkably similar to that of the Pharisees.³² Qumran *halakhic* terminology and that of the Rabbis had a number of crucial items in common.³³ How were these overlaps to be explained, and what did they teach us about the history of *halakha*?

On the one hand, the potential importance of Qumran evidence for writing the history of *halakha* cannot be overstated. Prior to the discovery of the Qumran texts our main sources for this endeavor were Rabbinic. Within this mass of evidence scholars could proceed to attempt to identify earlier or later strata by means of literary analysis, always a less than certain enterprise. Qumran sources prove that certain *halakhic* positions were ancient, a conclusion we can then compare with the evidence as seen through the eyes of the Rabbis when subjected to literary analysis.

On the other hand, what did these analyses of Qumran *halakha* teach concerning the identity of the Dead Sea sect? Could one continue to discuss the group at Qumran as distinctive when their law had much in common with other supposedly rival groups? If law was so crucial, as argued by Smith and others, what was the law which made a Qumran sectarian a member of his group and of no other?³⁴ Where, in all this complex set of overlaps, was there any room for the explanation of Qumran origins as beginning in opposition to the Maccabees?³⁵

Collapse

One last symptom of the dying consensus deserves mention. When a consensus is reigning, its adherents advance knowledge by working on questions requiring clarification *within* the context it provides. The consensus itself is rarely challenged: as discussed above, challenges, if any, are either resisted or overlooked. In some senses, the consensus matters more than any mere facts, for these facts only have meaning within a consensus. A dying consensus, however, attracts challengers like flies. As the realization spreads that the old intellectual thought patterns are no longer adequate to the job, many scholars try their hands at suggesting replacement systems.

Such has been the case in the past few years in Qumran studies, with articles and monographs, all proposing new theories, abounding.³⁶ In spite of Cross's almost triumphant proclamation of the emergence of coherent patterns of thought and meaning around the old consensus, Golb has declared that Qumran was a desert fortress, and the scrolls had no connection to the site, having been

placed in caves by Jews with a variety of affiliations as part of their effort to save examples of works significant in their world prior to the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans in 70 C.E.³⁷ And the Donceels have suggested that Qumran was nothing more than an agricultural villa of a rich Jerusalemite,³⁸ Humbert has suggested that Qumran was a Hasmonean villa, at which the Essenes built a place of worship where they offered sacrifices.³⁹ Closer to the old consensus, but nevertheless modifying it significantly, Stegemann has argued that Qumran was a center of the Essenes, perhaps their workshop for producing scrolls. The Essenes needed many scrolls for the use of their members, because they were the main Jewish group of the Second Temple era.⁴⁰ Taking a different tack, Schiffman has emphasized the Sadducean nature of the Qumran group, insisting that its members were not different from the Sadducees as described by Josephus and the New Testament. One and the same reality, according to Schiffman, stood behind the Qumran covenanters and the Jerusalem Sadducees whom we know from Greek sources. Any apparent differences are merely those of the perspective of the writers of our sources.⁴¹ Thus Josephus, according to Schiffman, knew a subgroup at a later period of the larger movement, hence his Sadducees differed from those at Qumran.⁴²

In all these suggestion, very little is left of the earlier claim that the Qumran group arose in protest against the usurpation of the priesthood by the Maccabees.

Which of these proposals, if any, will turn out to be the new consensus? That is too early to tell, but the existence of these numerous new theories, expounded in many monographs and articles, guarantees that intensive discussion will continue. Perhaps the old consensus will yet arise, Phoenix-like, from the ashes of its apparent demise, confirmed by explicit statements in some text as yet unpublished. While I consider this outcome unlikely (the nature of the unpublished material is known, and it has been assigned for editing;⁴³ if these sources contained information of this magnitude of importance, they would have already come to the attention of scholars), the Dead Sea Scrolls have been a source of unending surprise since the day the Bedouin shepherd entered Cave One, and hence no possibility can be ruled out with certainty. As the Dead Sea is in an active seismic zone, along the Syro-African rift, the possibility that some future earthquake will uncover new caves containing new texts also exists.

Recent events, since beginning writing this article, provide a perfect illustration of the fact that Qumran studies are an ongoing saga, that will continue to hold our attention for some time in the future. The area surrounding Qumran has been intensively searched for cave sites for almost fifty years, and all existing caves were supposedly identified and explored. Hence the possibility of new caves being discovered was raised in the text above only as a result of some future earthquake that might uncover them. Nevertheless, on August 11, 1995 Dr. Hanan Eshel, of Bar Ilan University, announced the discovery of four previously unknown man-made caves near Qumran, which



Photograph courtesy of the author.

Cave Four, adjacent to the site and accessible only through it, where many of the texts found at Qumran were discovered. Cave Four is a man-made cave. In antiquity, it was fitted out with shelves and served as a library for those who lived at the site. Texts found in Cave Four consisted of thousands of fragments, which posed a massive jigsaw puzzle of reconstruction. Virtually all the controversial texts, whose publication was delayed and which raise the problems discussed in this article, come from Cave Four.



Photograph courtesy of the author.

The cemetery. Approximately 1,100 graves are found in the main cemetery, to the east of the settlement. Selective exhumation of the remains, conducted while Qumran was under Jordanian control, revealed that the main cemetery contained the graves of men, while extensions to that cemetery and secondary places of burial were used for women and children. The cemetery thus has a major role in discussions of the composition of the community, in assessing whether its members were celibate, and in estimates of the size of the community.



Photograph courtesy of the author.

The tower in the central area of the Qumran settlement. This tower occupies a key place in Golb's theory that the Qumran site was a Hasmonean fortress.



Photograph courtesy of the author.

The room designated by the excavators as the scriptorium, where they believed scrolls were copied, and so identified by the sign on the site. The function of this room, well lit and facing East, where remnants of two inkwells and tables of an odd shape (5 meters long, by 40 centimeters across, and 50 centimeters high) were found, have since been much debated. One such issue, for example, is whether these tables were used for copying texts—in spite of their low heights, and in spite of the fact that ancient scribes usually sat cross-legged and rested the text they were writing on their laps. According to the Donceels, this was a room for holding banquets in the villa, which they believe Qumran to have been.

will now be excavated by an expedition led by Dr. Eshel and Mr. Magen Broshi of the Shrine of the Book, of the Israel Museum.

Man-made caves are very likely to contain human artifacts of one sort or other (indeed, six of the eleven known scroll caves were man-made). What will be found when these four caves are excavated, and how these finds (if any) will relate to the numerous theories discussed above, is impossible to predict, but these developments confirm the view that the story of Dead Sea Scroll studies may have many more breathtaking turns before it reaches a new resting place.

Whatever the reason, so long as the labor of publishing the full collection of texts is incomplete, no new consensus is likely to emerge. Having been proven wrong in a premature judgment based on partial evidence, the scholarly community is now virtually guaranteed to delay reaching a new common conclusion until all the data is known. The crisis in the scrollery, with all its attendant discomfort, is therefore still far from being over.

Conclusion

Perhaps the best summary of the situation one can offer is to return to Plato's Allegory of the Cave. It is unpleasant to be dragged out of the cave into the bright light of day. Those thought wise at identifying the shadows of copies on the wall of the cave may discover that much of their wisdom has been disproved; they may not find the new world of knowledge congenial. New skills are needed to see clearly in the new bright light. Convincing those remaining behind in the cave of the knowledge now available and deserving to be brought to bear on issues of great concern may not be easy: the philosopher forced to return to the cave and explain reality, as only he has come to know it, to the inhabitants may well be executed. Nevertheless, for all the unpleasantness, in spite of all the confusion engendered by wandering around without a reliable guide in a changed world, who would return to the previous conditions? The willingness to acknowledge uncongenial data, and the attempt to understand sources that challenge accepted views are, after all, among the most significant marks of historical scholarship, distinguishing the latter from mere rhetoric or propagandizing.

The fact that a new consensus will likely only become dominant when the full range of Qumran sources has been published is the chief reason, in my view, for encouraging those responsible to complete their labors as quickly as possible. We depend on their work to establish the conditions necessary for a new consensus, and the intellectual order only it can provide. In the meantime, a drama of the highest intellectual order is being played out before our eyes. Even while we are waiting for its conclusion, while the tension of its uncertainty and open-endedness may sometimes seem unbearable, while the pain of abandoning old views can still be felt, there is, in fact, much to learn and even much to enjoy.

NOTES

1. L. Fleck, *The Genesis and Development of a Scientific Fact* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979); T. Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962); M. Douglas, *How Institutions Think* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1986).
2. The formal system for citing Qumran works indicates first the number of the cave in which the manuscript was discovered (e.g., 1Q, 4Q, or 11Q), followed by either a number or an abbreviation of the accepted title of the work. In this case, 1QS is the manuscript from Cave One of the Manual of Discipline, abbreviated by its Hebrew title *Serekh hayahad*. The *halakhic* letter 4QMMT, discussed below, is the work known from several manuscripts found in Cave Four, whose full title is *Miqsat Maase haTorah*.
3. Of the many English translations available, the most widely accessible remains G. Vermes, *The Dead Sea Scrolls in English* (London: Penguin, 1990³).
4. See R. DeVaux, *Archaeology and the Dead Sea Scrolls* (London: Oxford University Press, 1973). DeVaux never prepared a final formal report on his excavations. For the difficulties now complicating the preparation of a final report (made even more severe by the loss of finds in the interim) see R. Donceel, "Reprise des travaux de publication des fouilles au Khirbet Qumran," *Revue Biblique* 99 (1992): 557-73.
5. A convenient collection of these sources, with introductions and commentary is G. Vermes and M. Goodman (eds.), *The Essenes According to the Classical Sources* (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1989). Josephus also knew of a marrying order of Essenes, ignored in the description above for the sake of simplicity.
6. On the role of the Sadoqites at Qumran see J. Liver, "The 'Sons of Zadok the Priests,'" *Revue de Qumran* 6 (1967/70): 1-30. See also the discussion below.
7. F. M. Cross, Jr., "The Early History of the Qumran Community," in D. Freedman and J. Greenfield (eds), *New Directions in Biblical Archeology* (Garden City: Doubleday, 1969), p. 70.
8. Cross, Jr., "Early History," p. 81. The notion that the rise of the Hasmoneans created a fundamental change in Jewish life, with the attendant demotion of the old Sadoqite families, is an old one. It goes back, in one form or another, at least as far as A. Geiger, *Urschrift und Übersetzungen der Bibel in ihrer Abhängigkeit von der innern Entwicklung des Judentums* (Frankfurt am Main: Verlag Mada, 1928³), pp. 101-102. Note also Cross's identification of the Qumran group with the Essenes, discussed by him at greater length, "Early History," 75-77.
9. Cross, Jr., "Early History," pp. 77-78.
10. A. S. van der Woude, "Wicked Priest or Wicked Priests? Reflections on the Identification of the Wicked Priest in the Habakkuk Commentary," *Journal of Jewish Studies* 33 (1982): 349-59, was to despair of the possibility of suggesting a precise identification for the "wicked priest." He therefore suggested that "wicked priest" was a generic term for all rulers of the Hasmonean dynasty.
11. One of the most notable players of this part was S. Zeitlin, who in a long series of articles in *Jewish Quarterly Review* denounced the Dead Sea Scrolls as medieval forgeries. A vigorous consensus can be ruthless in branding those who refuse to accept its conclusions as deviants. By a process whose dynamics I leave to others to explain, those regarded as deviants begin to respond as deviants.
12. This is especially true of Liver's comments on the role of the Sadoqites at Qumran. See further Liver, "Sons of Zadok," 27-30, and the discussion of his views below.
13. See A. I. Baumgarten, "The Rule of the Martian as Applied to Qumran," *Israel Oriental Studies* 14 (1994): 121-42; "The Temple Scroll, Toilet Practices, and the Essenes," *Jewish History* 10 (1996). For a slightly different perspective on these issues, but reaching a conclusion I share wholeheartedly, see now M. Goodman, "A Note on the Qumran Sectarrians, the Essenes and Josephus," *Journal of Jewish Studies* 46 (1995): 161-66.
14. For a recent attempt to assert the sectarian nature of the Copper Scroll see S. Goranson, "Sectarianism, Geography and the Copper Scroll," *Journal of Jewish Studies* 43 (1992): 282-87.
15. Initial publication in Y. Yadin (ed.), *The Temple Scroll* (Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, Institute of Archaeology of the Hebrew University, Shrine of the Book, 1977).

16. See B. Levine, "The Temple Scroll: Aspects of its Historical Provenance and Literary Character," *Bulletin of the American School of Oriental Research* 232 (1978): 5–23. See also L. Schiffman, "The Temple Scroll in Literary and Philological Perspective," in W. S. Green (ed.), *Approaches to Ancient Judaism II* (Missoula, MT: Scholars Press for Brown University, 1980), pp. 143–155. Many of the essays in G. Brooke (ed.), *Temple Scroll Studies* (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1989) treat this issue. Other important contributions to the discussion include B. Z. Wacholder, *The Dawn of Qumran: The Sectarian Torah and the Teacher of Righteousness* (Cincinnati: Hebrew Union College Press, 1983); D. Rokeah, "The Temple Scroll, Philo, Josephus and the Talmud," *Journal of Theological Studies* 34 (1983): 515–26; H. Stegemann, "The Origins of the Temple Scroll," *Supplement to Vetus Testamentum* 40 (1988): 235–56; H. Stegemann, "The Institutions of Israel in the Temple Scroll," in D. Dimant and U. Rappaport (eds.), *The Dead Sea Scrolls: Forty Years of Research* (Leiden/New York: E. J. Brill; Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1992), pp. 156–85; D. Dimant, "The Qumran Manuscripts: Contents and Significance," in D. Dimant and L. Schiffman (eds.), *Time to Prepare the Way in the Wilderness* (Leiden/New York: E. J. Brill, 1995), pp. 23–58.
17. See for example F. Garcia Martinez and A. S. van der Woude, "A Gronigen Hypothesis of Qumran Origins," *Revue de Qumran* 14 (1990): 537. See also P. R. Davies, *Behind the Essenes: History and Ideology in the Dead Sea Scrolls* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1987), pp. 35–36.
18. See E. Qimron & J. Strugnell, "An Unpublished Halakhic Letter from Qumran," *Israel Museum Journal* 2 (1984–85): 9–12; E. Qimron & J. Strugnell, "An Unpublished Halakhic Letter from Qumran," *Biblical Archeology Today: Proceedings of the International Conference on Biblical Archeology Jerusalem April 1984* (Jerusalem, 1985), 400–408. See also L. Schiffman, "The New Halakhic Letter (4QMMT) and the Origins of the Dead Sea Sect," *Biblical Archaeologist* 53 (1990): 64–73; Y. Sussmann, "Research on the History of the Halacha and the Scrolls of the Judean Desert," *Tarbiz* 59 (1989/90): 11–76 [in Hebrew]. The official publication was as E. Qimron and J. Strugnell, *Discoveries in the Judean Desert X, Qumran Cave 4, V, Miqsat Maase ha-Torah* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994).
19. N. Golb, *Who Wrote the Dead Sea Scrolls?: The Search for the Secret of Qumran* (New York: Scribner, 1995), 177–216. Note that Golb's interpretation of the reason for the delays in publication of Qumran texts, attractive as it may be, is less than perfect: it cannot explain why biblical texts, which posed no dilemma to the established consensus, were also slow to appear.
20. See M. Broshi, *The Damascus Document Reconsidered* (Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, Shrine of the Book, Israel Museum, 1992). A prepublication edition of the Cave Four fragments can be found in B. Z. Wacholder and M. Abegg, *A Preliminary Edition of the Unpublished Dead Sea Scrolls: The Hebrew and Aramaic Texts from Cave Four, Fascicle One* (Washington, DC: Biblical Archaeology Society, 1991), pp. 1–59.
21. G. Vermes, "Preliminary Remarks on Unpublished Fragments of the Community Rule from Qumran Cave Four," *Journal of Jewish Studies* 42 (1991): 254–55.
22. See Davies, *Behind the Essenes*, pp. 51–72.
23. See the collection of studies published by E. Hobsbawm and T. Ranger (eds.), *The Invention of Tradition* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1983).
24. See E. & H. Eshel and A. Yardeni, "A Qumran Composition Containing Part of Ps. 154 and a Prayer for the Welfare of King Jonathan and his Kingdom," *Israel Exploration Journal* 42 (1992): 192–229.
25. See D. Harrington and J. Strugnell, "Qumran Cave 4 Texts: A New Publication," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 112 (1993): 498–99.
26. See D. Flusser, "Some Notes about the Prayer for King Jonathan," *Tarbiz* 61 (1991/92): 297–300 [in Hebrew].
27. These points are based on a summary of the hortatory epilogue of the *halakhic* letter, 4QMMT section C. The dilemma posed by this section to the old consensus is such that even when 4QMMT was finally formally published, after more than a decade of delay, there was no full-scale discussion of section C. As Strugnell concludes in his afterword, *Discoveries in the Judean Desert, X*, p. 205: "such an important study remains to be done."
28. See above n. 2.

29. M. Smith, "What is Implied by the Variety of Messianic Figures?" *Journal of Biblical Literature* 78 (1959): 66–72.
30. M. Smith, "The Dead Sea Sect in Relation to Ancient Judaism," *New Testament Studies* 7 (1960): 360.
31. Sussmann, "Research," 11–76.
32. See Ginzberg's studies of the Damascus Document, which appeared long after his death, in English, as L. Ginzberg, *An Unknown Jewish Sect* (New York: Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1976). Ginzberg's conclusions have been confirmed by the detailed research of L. Schiffman, *Law, Custom and Messianism in the Dead Sea Sect* (Jerusalem: Merkaz Zalman Shazar le-toldot Yisra'el, 1993), pp. 90–135 [in Hebrew].
33. Sussmann, "Research," pp. 26, 37; E. Qimron, "Halakhic Terms in the Dead Sea Scrolls and their Contribution to the History of the Early *Halakha*," in M. Broshi, S. Japhet, D. Schwartz & S. Talmon (eds.), *The Scrolls of the Judean Desert: Forty Years of Research* (Jerusalem: Mosad Bialik, 1992), pp. 128–38,
34. Cf. H. Stegemann, "The Qumran Essenes: Local Members of the Main Jewish Union in Late Second Temple Times," in J. Barrera and L. Montaner (eds.), *The Madrid Qumran Congress: Proceedings of the International Congress on the Dead Sea Scrolls, Madrid, 18–21 March 1991* (Leiden/New York: Brill; Madrid: Editorial Complutense, 1992), vol. 1, pp. 106–107, and J. Baumgarten, "The Disqualification of Priests in 4Q Fragments of the 'Damascus Document,' A Specimen of the Recovery of pre-Rabbinic Halakha," in J. Barrera and L. Montaner (eds.), *Madrid Qumran Congress* (Leiden/New York: Brill; Madrid: Editorial Complutense, 1992), vol. 2, pp. 510–13.
35. This point was conceded by Cross in the concluding sentences of his "Some Notes on a Generation of Qumran Studies," in J. Barrera and L. Montaner (eds.), *Madrid Qumran Congress* (Leiden/New York: Brill; Madrid: Editorial Complutense, 1992), vol. 1, p. 14.
36. In the discussion below I summarize briefly different scholarly positions without attempting any evaluation, and without commenting which proposal seems more or less convincing. I have adopted this approach because the existence of these different views is the crucial fact for my argument, much more important than what can be said for or against the plausibility of any individual interpretive scheme.
37. Golb has argued this conclusion in a long series of articles written over the years, now summarized in his *Who Wrote the Dead Sea Scrolls?*
38. For a first statement of this view see P. Donceel-Voute, "Coenaculum - La salle à l'étage du locus 30 à Khirbet Qumran sur la Mer Morte," *Banquets de l'Orient=Res Orientales* 4 (1992): 61–84.
39. J. B. Humbert, "L'Espace Sacré à Qumran," *Revue Biblique* 101 (1994): 161–214.
40. Stegemann, "Qumran Essenes," pp. 82–166. Stegemann has expanded the treatment of these matters in his *Die Essener, Qumran, Johannes der Täufer und Jesus, ein Sachbuch* (Freiburg: Herder, 1994).
41. Schiffman, "New Halakhic Letter," 72, n. 15.
42. See L. Schiffman, "Pharisaic and Sadducean Halakhah in Light of the Dead Sea Scrolls," *Dead Sea Discoveries* 1 (1994): 289–99. Schiffman has recently expanded his thesis concerning the Sadducean nature of the Qumran community in a monograph length study, *Reclaiming the Dead Sea Scrolls: The History of Judaism, the Background of Christianity, the Lost Library of Qumran* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1994).
43. See E. Tov, "The Unpublished Qumran Texts from Caves 4 and 11," *Journal of Jewish Studies* 43 (1992): 101–36.

LILLIAN ELKIN

Manna

The miracle was manna
And when they tired of it
A flock of birds conveniently descended
And they ate and looked amazed.
Child-like they fought but promises were given.
The rock was water and the storm
Berated mountains and Moses thundered
Commandment but was gentle too.

Serpents and idols and the bronze star of Egypt
Fell like a net across the desert,
And some forgot the overseer and whip
And longed for mats on straw, familiar cruelty.
But Moses growing old denied the ghosts
Of cities, despised the pyramided gods,
And Jordan River flowed and banks were green.

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Sarah Talks to God

“And Abraham stretched forth his hand and
took the knife to slay his son.”

And why O king, my God, should the blood of a child
Run precious in your house?
My small boy has brought wheat to your altar
And in the summer gathered fruits and wild flowers.
What will you do with small fingers
And the fright of little hands?
More feeble is he than a bird on your altar
And his heart is a wing.
If we have sinned against your greatness
We have been humble too.
And in the shadows of your timeless sandals
The small gods were weeds.
We have set our house for your guests
And I have brought water and blessed their coming.
I have left the home of familiar herds and shepherds
And my mother's loom is silent.
I have wept in strange lands
But never have I questioned Abraham or his will
Which was Your own.
I am a woman and this is my child
And my love for him is greater than fear;
And my sorrow surrounds me with knives
And I am bitter in my doubts.

Afternoon in Tel Aviv

Her olive skin drowns the sun; she walks in sandals
And sprays of sand are on her legs.
It is three or four o'clock – we have given up time
And in the thick heat the stores open like umbrellas.

At the street cafe with three sticky tables
We stop for drinks; she orders lemon and I orange.
The waiter changes the order knowing we're too tired for
argument.

I sit watching the street become late afternoon.
A woman carries a bottle of milk; a child cries and will not
follow.
Across the street the awning is raised over melons and wet
plums.
A bus of soldiers passes; they wave to the drinker beside me.
The language is universal; she puts the drink down and
waves back.
She motions me to leave. Her decisions are impertinent,
Even for a tanned girl, born in Chicago, on a street in Tel Aviv.

She says, "These streets aren't strange, only I am.
The beach was crowded, I found a rock and took my sandals
off.
I met two boys; we had no common language.
We drank soda; they walked me to the hotel,
We said 'Shalom.'
How do you say my brother who is my stranger?"

Jewish Studies in Northern California: A Symposium

MOSES RISCHIN

ON MAY 27TH 1995, IN THE COURSE OF INTRODUCING a group of younger scholars at a symposium of the American Jewish Historical Society entitled, "The Renaissance of Jewish Studies: Personal Reflections," I found myself peering through a double lens: at once I was thrust back to my own youth and at the same time riveted to the present.

For over three decades, I, a native New Yorker, had been teaching at California universities, first at UCLA, and since 1964, at San Francisco State. During most of that time, I also served as director of the newly-created Western Jewish History Center of the Judah L. Magnes Museum, that unique American-Jewish cultural construct so ingeniously fashioned by its multi-faceted director, the Jewish educator, Seymour Fromer.

Consequently, when for the first time in its one-hundred-and-three-year history, the American Jewish Historical Society chose to meet in San Francisco, I was asked to chair the conference, "Regional History as National History." As a scholarly gathering, the conference would also celebrate the coming-of-age of a new western Jewish regional historical consciousness, one transformed by national and international events and developments in the previous half century. These were the decades when so many hundreds of thousands of us had changed our addresses from Massachusetts, New York, Pennsylvania, and other points east to the once distant west. There still in motion and in the process of settlement, we discovered ourselves to be in a new world, and then spent much of our lives blending older and newer identities, recovering many aspects of our older selves, even as we experimented with newer forms.

For a historian, born, raised, and educated as I was, San Francisco was almost a homecoming, albeit a continent away from home. Brooklyn, Cambridge, and New York, Brooklyn College and Harvard, and the streets, forums, parks, playgrounds, and libraries along the way, especially the libraries of Manhattan, permeated my first major book, *The Promised City: New York's Jews 1870-1914*. I never expected to find myself in "The Promised City of San

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Francisco” as Herbert Croly hailed the city in 1906—just before, ironically, the earthquake and fire—and his subsequent *The Promise of American Life*, Croly’s guide to nationalized democracy, and his assumption of the role of founding editor of *The New Republic*.

But there I was, a historian of the city, of immigration, and of Jewish immigration during its most turbulent era, facing the turbulence of San Francisco in the sixties. I was the son of émigrés from Russia, cast forth by World War I and the Bolshevik Revolution via the alembic of German Switzerland, who were spattered with the lava and ashes strewn about during the most tumultuous decade of their lives. Now myself an inner émigré of sorts, if unlike my parents, I also experienced a similar profound need both to sustain and deepen the old and assimilate the new. As an historian of immigration, now focusing on westward migration, I found myself exulting in the splendors of California and the West and its diverse Jewish community while at the same time aspiring to a greater regional Jewish cultural and university presence.

My experiences in approaching the world of Jewish Studies were necessarily different from those of my younger colleagues and had taken a far more oblique and informal path than theirs. With rare exception, in the 1950s Jewish history had yet to find a place for itself in university history departments, and in any case, was viewed askance; the story of Israel still proved premature and the Holocaust, understandably, had not even been identified. American Jewish history, for which I prepared an inventory in 1954, was even more marginal. In these years, despite the brilliant pioneer work of Oscar Handlin and John Higham, the pluralistic, the ethnic, the extra-American and world dimensions of the American experience still seemed irrelevant to an American history and American studies professoriat resolute in its commitment to defining America’s undefiled uniqueness. At a time when the term ethnicity was virtually unknown, immigration history, at best borderline, received short shrift. Needless to say, the many special group-study clusters, from ethnic studies to women’s studies, these days taken for granted, had not yet even been imagined.

Fortunately, my mentor was Oscar Handlin. Teaching primarily by example, he served as a sounding board for me in the early years of my intellectual development and proved critical in extending the range of my friendships in ever unexpected directions. A number of his students, notably William V. Shannon and Thomas N. Brown, budding historians of the American Irish, and Robert D. Cross, a student of American Catholicism, helped me understand the experience of that major ethnic and religious group that virtually had been ignored, while Rudolf J. Vecoli and Theodore Salutos never let me forget the Italians and Greeks. Much earlier and much later, my association with Solomon F. Bloom, Rudolf Glanz, Lucy Dawidowicz, and Milton Himmelfarb expanded my understanding of the variousness of Jewish life as did my friendship with Alfred Kazin, Jacob Price, and Arther Goren. Most important in alerting me to the diversity of American pluralism were my many intimate conversations with the ever-ebullient Horace M. Kallen and

ever-laconic John Higham. In California and the West, my friendship with Harry Lang, crackerjack correspondent and writer for the *Jewish Daily Forward*, John Tracy Ellis, the Catholic Church historian, and Gerald T. White and Earl Pomeroy, kept me alert to the interstitial spaces so critical to an understanding of the human no less than the group and the Jewish experience.

The emergence in less than a decade of a major modern Jewish studies university constellation in northern California—in complement to that of southern California—surely would please all my friends. A new-felt pride in an extraordinary array of scholars of impressive attainments, of rich and varied course-offerings, and of burgeoning archival, library, and cultural resources, including the massive personal library and voluminous papers of Salo W. Baron, have generated an unprecedented elan and resonance. The transfer in 1994 of the venerable and distinguished intellectual and scholarly journals, *Jewish Social Studies* from New York to Stanford and the editorial offices of *Judaism* to Santa Cruz, merely ratified the region's claim to national stature. It is in the context of these many developments that the provocative, candid, and often profound personal reflections of the five participants in our symposium, including Deborah Dash Moore from Vassar, should be read. They bear witness to the close relationship between first-rate scholarship and personal self-realization, the compatibility of learning with life, and evoke the new physiognomy of Jewish studies in northern California.

I'll Take Manhattan: Reflections on Jewish Studies

DEBORAH DASH MOORE

AN INVITATION FROM MOSES RISCHIN TO REFLECT UPON the renaissance of Jewish studies from my “own personal, academic, intellectual, and cultural history” took me by surprise. That there has been a renaissance of Jewish studies in the past decade cannot be doubted; neither can its impact upon the lives of those of us working in the field be questioned. Yet at a conference on “Regional History as National History” organized by Rischin for the annual meeting of the American Jewish Historical Society and sponsored by the Western Jewish History Center of the Judah L. Magnes Museum—who would be interested in my idiosyncratic perspective? Was there room in such a context to explore the issue of the renaissance of Jewish studies from a point of view consciously derived from my personal, academic, intellectual, and cultural history? When I realized that I would not be alone, and therefore my own slanted view would be complemented by other interpretations, I recognized that these reflections might in their sum prove to be more than their individual parts. In addition, as Rischin undoubtedly surmised, enough time has passed so that my own personal history is now part of a larger academic, intellectual, and cultural historical moment that may illuminate a transition from one era to another. Indeed, my own history is certainly regional history.

I was born and bred in New York City. In those years, the 1950s and 1960s, we called it “the City”; no other modifier than the definite article was needed. There was only one City, and I grew up as close to the center of Jewish life outside of Israel as you could get. Living in such a Jewish place clearly colored my perceptions of the possibilities and potentials of Jewish studies. There were still over two million Jews in New York City (a population then roughly equal to that of the State of Israel) and they were approximately 25 percent of the city’s residents. “As no other city is, New York is their home: here a Jew can be what he wants to be,” a *Fortune* magazine article put it in 1960.¹ However, it is not enough to know that I grew up in the City, because the City is a big, diverse place made up of distinctive neighborhoods, each with its own personality. I lived on the edge of Greenwich Village, or, what we called “the Village.” Like “the City,” there was only one Village. When I was growing up

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and people asked me where I lived, I usually answered: "In the City, in the Village." (I used to stretch the boundaries. Nowadays the neighborhood is called Chelsea, which was its real name back then, but back then Chelsea had no panache, despite the Chelsea Hotel.)

What did it mean to grow up in the City, in the Village? It meant growing up on sidewalks, which was where we played ball and hopscotch, skated, biked, jumped rope, and generally hung out. It meant learning to use public transportation, buses and subways—certainly before one's teenage years. It meant living across the street from industrial buildings—in my case a bindery factory and a printing plant—and having one's father walk to work. It meant living on one floor (something my students today have difficulty imagining) in an apartment building. And that meant when it was raining out, you could go visiting friends without getting wet. (This is beginning to sound like the modern marvels of Kansas City in the musical "Oklahoma.")

There were disadvantages to city living, I'm sure. There were also bars and flophouses and cheap hotels across the street. The pleasures of the corner drugstore, with its soda fountain that could be entered directly through its back door from the lobby of my apartment building, had to be weighed against the fact that if I wanted to see a tree and some grass, I had to walk a quarter of a mile to the nearest park (if Union Square may be so called). The city was also a dangerous place. My mother regularly used to call our attention to a terrible mugging, or a horrible rape, or a deadly assault. The point of these news stories, I think, was to breed in me and my sister a healthy sense of fear and caution, so that when we wandered around the city—aboveground and underground—we knew the dangers lurking and were ready to face the perils. Needless to say, because we were prepared, nothing ever happened. That, I suspect, was the point. Yet one knew when one was tempting fate. Like the time I chose to walk down a long, deserted, dimly-lit stretch of subway tunnel when I saw approaching me a man wearing a raincoat. Or the time I agreed to visit the apartment of an artist and poet who sat down next to me in Washington Square Park where I was sketching. Yet I survived the tunnel walk and I managed to extricate myself from the artist's apartment. For all its dangers and temptations, the city was the best place in the world to grow up in, we were convinced. Where else could you see live theater on student discounts? or free Shakespeare in the park? or listen to jazz and folksingers in cafes? or visit art galleries and museums? The ones who were deprived, we were convinced, were those who grew up in the suburbs. My parents, but especially my mother, loathed the suburbs. In our house it was an epithet: "Oh, he or she is from the suburbs," dropped witheringly. It explained everything from bad manners to wrong politics, from skewed values to poor taste. I was a city girl, one of the elect.

Given this upbringing, it is not surprising that I fell in love with the City as an urban place, but also as a Jewish one. I went to public high school and only many years later did I learn that the decision to close the public schools on the Jewish holidays had been made as recently as 1960. I took for granted the equal

time given to Jewish holidays, the equal respect accorded them with Christian holidays. Perhaps this was also because my family was so American. The only link to an immigrant past was my grandmother, on my mother's side, who had come over at a young age—from England. My other grandparents were born in the States. No one spoke Yiddish, though we were taught Hebrew. This meant that Jewish learning carried no associations of foreignness; it was part of one's American heritage, though it was carried out under sectarian auspices. I went to Hebrew high school, a supplementary school under the auspices of the Society for the Advancement of Judaism, where I imbibed Reconstructionism as my religious tradition. There I studied Tanach, Mishnah, Hebrew, and Jewish history. I remember finding Hebrew high school more intellectually stimulating than public high school and more academically rigorous.

My choice of college reflected these concerns (and, with hindsight, the fact that my father, who went to an elite Ivy League school, was quite unhappy there as a Jew). I went to Brandeis University, where not only were there no classes on the High Holidays, but there were also no classes on Sukkot or Shemini Atzeret. At Brandeis I could take Jewish studies courses—which I did—along with my other courses. In short, it is only hindsight and a measure of consciousness-raising that made me realize that I was living in one of the few places where Jewishness and Americanness, Jewish learning and American studies, went hand in hand. That consciousness-raising took place at Vassar College, where I was hired as a member of the religion department, though I was quite obviously trained as an historian. There was a measure of poetic justice in my joining the Vassar faculty, since many years earlier Vassar College had refused to admit my mother as a student because it had a quota for Jewish students.

I had not been aware of the relatively fragile position of Jewish studies in America before I arrived at Vassar, because after Brandeis I had returned to the City to attend Columbia University for my degree in history. There Gerson Cohen and Ismar Schorsch appeared as much a part of the history department as James Shenton or John Garraty. Only in retrospect do I realize that my choice of field, American Jewish history, which came so naturally to me, a Reconstructionist, fourth-generation American Jew, was actually a rather precarious choice, not quite at home in American history despite the rise of social history and something of a provincial cousin to Jewish history—young, awkward, ill-mannered, unable to fit into the prepared seats without fidgeting. At the time, both Schorsch and Cohen encouraged me to pursue my studies, though I never learned any American Jewish history in any of the Jewish history courses I took. Similarly David Rothman, an American social historian, enthusiastically supported my research on New York Jews. Unlike Jewish history however, American history appeared to recognize American Jews, at least as immigrants. *The Promised City* by Moses Rischin was required reading in Garraty's course in the Gilded Age. Again, only in retrospect did I realize that this was the only book on American Jewish history that I read as a graduate (or undergraduate) student, though Aryeh Goren's *New York Jews and the Quest*

for Community, which I first read as a dissertation, inspired me to pick up the story where Rischin left off.

And then I went to Vassar, not the only Jew on campus but the only visibly identified one. Of course, I didn't have a Jewish name, but a colleague, who arrived the same year in the anthropology department, did. For years people in the bookstore resolved the cognitive dissonance between my name and my identity by calling me Judith Goldstein, a more appropriate name than Moore for the only Jewish studies faculty member. Now Vassar is a peculiar vantage point, indeed, from which to watch the efflorescence of Jewish studies, especially for someone from my background. When I arrived on a nontenure-line position at Vassar there was no Hebrew offered; the history department refused to cross-list my courses; and I had to supply a reading list on the Holocaust to the professor teaching modern German history because, in the late 1970s, he thought there were no materials available. In short, Vassar challenged most of my assumptions about how Jewish studies was integral to the academy. Although I had only moved seventy miles outside of the City, I had moved into another world. (It was also, unfortunately, the suburbs.)

So I found myself a second intellectual home: the YIVO Institute for Jewish Research. I joined the faculty. I discovered the world of Yiddish and left-wing politics (old left-wing politics—I knew from my Brandeis and Columbia years about new-left politics). I watched in amazement as a meeting to plan an exhibit disintegrated over charges of who said what in August 1939 after the Hitler-Stalin pact was signed. And I did my best to stimulate an interest in New York Jews as a new focus for YIVO, a rich area of research worthy of its attention. Turning the institution's gaze away from eastern Europe wasn't easy, and though I organized some wonderful public conferences—such as Culture and Community of New York Jews—that drew some of the largest crowds YIVO had ever seen, and though I subsequently revived the *YIVO Annual*, I ultimately failed to shift the institution's gaze. At YIVO, though, I learned of a tradition of social science scholarship quite different from American sociology. This tradition reached out to ordinary Jews through contests, autobiography, oral history, and folklore, and its emphasis on non-elites anticipated research in American Jewish history.

After six years of involvement with YIVO, I returned to Israel for the first time as a scholar. I had visited with my family in the early 1960s, and again after the Six Day War, but for a whole decade I had not been there—the decade in which I became an American Jewish historian. In 1981 I went to the World Union of Jewish Studies conference to give a paper and to participate in a workshop on teaching Jewish civilization in the contemporary era. For Israelis that era extends from World War I, and so included the interwar period of my research on New York Jews. The workshop drew young scholars from around the world and had a distinctly Zionist focus: by inviting us to participate, Israelis were demonstrating their centrality to Jewish studies teaching on a

university level. It was an effective initiative that reached and stimulated me to redesign several of my courses.

That initial visit was multiplied, until I spent a Fulbright year at the Hebrew University and learned about the issues and methods of Jewish historians. Amazingly, in Israel they were interested in American Jewish history—an interest focused upon Zionist politics, but the concerns of social history were recognized. Israelis also wanted to learn about America, and they held certain views of Americans and American Jews that often did not match the realities. I recall speaking at a conference on the new left, in honor of J. L. Talmon, about how one could be active in new-left causes and be a committed Jew. Judging by the questions I received, I hadn't convinced many in the audience. What I am suggesting, I guess, is that I have marched to the tune of a different drummer. In the 1960s and 1970s, before Jewish studies took off, I was deeply integrated into both Jewish and American historical study. Since the late 1970s and 1980s, during a renaissance of Jewish studies, I have been acutely aware of my marginality even as I recognize that I am standing in a place most observers would see as central. Certainly for the past three years, when I have served as director of American culture studies at Vassar, my name and my public identity appear to coincide—even as Vassar has recognized that Jews, and Jewish studies, are integral to American studies. I suppose that I could call myself a border crosser since crossing borders these days has become quite popular, while marginality is so old-fashioned.

So how does this relate to Jewish studies as it has grown? Well, Jewish studies is still not my New York City of the 1960s; that is, diverse, integrated, clever, street-smart, and idealistic. Indeed, I doubt it ever will be. But it has spread to all sorts of institutions and it does offer suburban students a taste of a rich and intense Jewish world. A handful get hooked and decide to study further. Even Vassar now has three faculty, two tenured and one not, teaching Jewish studies and Hebrew language instruction in the religion department. Indeed, religion departments have often provided more congenial homes for Jewish studies scholars than history departments (and I admit that I am disappointed in my fellow historians for their lack of vision and initiative). Religious studies scholars have evinced a healthy and growing curiosity about Jews and Judaism; they no longer see Judaism as prelude to Christianity but as legitimate and authentic in all its manifestations. Certainly the presence of a panel devoted to exploring the renaissance of Jewish studies involving five scholars—including the diverse institutions standing behind each scholar—suggests how much has changed in the past twenty years (or less), for most of us were innovators in bringing Jewish studies to campus. Yet I am impatient. Although I can't really expect the academy to duplicate the City in its fusion of creativity, promise and challenge, I do think it legitimate to ask why American Jewish history has fared so poorly in these years. Why is there only one chair in the field in a non-Jewish university? Why do gifted scholars go for

years on nontenure-line positions? Why is the field still a stepchild of Jewish history and not, at least in this country, one of its cornerstones?

Look at what American Jewish history has to offer: New York City's skyline, as a metaphor, of course. Picture the famous skyline, symbol of modernity and of America to millions. What do you notice first? Well, if you're an old New Yorker like I am, you notice the Empire State Building. A classic. In terms of American Jewish history, the Empire State Building is immigrant history. Constantly revisited, it still has new treasures and insights to yield. Jews as immigrants occupy a secure and significant place in American history. Classic, one might say. And whatever new trends develop, one can find it worthwhile to mine immigrant Jewish history again. For example, women's history, or consumer culture, or domestic culture, or history of sexuality. But, some would contend that today the World Trade Towers have overshadowed the venerable Empire State Building. The twin towers can be likened to Holocaust studies. Burgeoning, they have acquired a legitimacy and centrality that casts a long shadow. These studies include political histories, communication studies, cultural studies work on memory, autobiography, monuments and museums, and public Jewish culture. This story may be replacing the immigrant saga as the Jewish piece of American history. Witness last year's PBS broadcast on America and the Holocaust, the first time its extensive American Experience series has focused on Jews. If the World Trade Towers and Empire State Building are the first sights to catch one's eye, then the Chrysler Building is a good second-time around favorite for its elegance, grace, and sophistication. I would liken it to the New York Intellectuals. Like immigrant history, the intellectuals are close to becoming a classic "community" (or "family" as they often refer to themselves), to be returned to for new insights. By contrast, I would liken American Jewish religious studies to the New York Public Library. Too short for landscape prominence, its rich resources rarely draw the first- or even second-time tourist. Yet what a wealth of material lies inside. Then there is the Statue of Liberty—one of our most deeply contested sites. I would compare it to studies of Jewish politics, specifically relations of African-Americans and American Jews. Finally, we have 42nd Street and Times Square with its gaudy display of popular culture, a place where identities endure—the Times Building, though the Times has not owned the building for years—even as new names appear. This area is gradually receiving attention, especially from young scholars who are giving studies of popular culture new respect, while Times Square itself is undergoing rehabilitation.

With such a skyline, American Jewish history should be the hottest item on the block and Jewish studies programs should be knocking on our door wanting a piece of the action. We have intimate and daring stories to tell, funny and sad ones too, not to mention the powerful, dramatic, and trivial. Our own history is waiting for us to claim it and give it a place in our best universities so Americans can learn it, share it, wrestle with it. Were we to do that, then maybe

Jewish studies would approach my New York City in the 1960s: integrated, energetic, visionary, and filled with boundless promise.

NOTES

1. Sam Welles, "The Jewish Elan," *Fortune Magazine* (February 1960): p. 134.

Between Los Angeles and Berkeley: Memoirs of a California Jewish Historian

DAVID BIALE

SEVERAL YEARS AGO I WAS INVITED BY THE BERLIN Jewish Community to participate in a conference on the theme of "The Jews of California." Like many of my co-participants, I later discovered, my initial reaction was to laugh. Was there such an identity? But once I got to Berlin and actually tried to formulate coherent answers to the questions posed by the organizers, I realized that there might just be something to growing up and living as a Jew in California that is distinctive and possibly even unique.

I was born in Los Angeles in the years following World War II, the golden age of endless summers and equally endless smog alerts. My father had come to this "goldene medina" from Poland in the late 1920s to study agriculture in order to become a *halutz* in Palestine. But he won a fellowship to do graduate work and ended up staying. My mother was also an immigrant to California, but not from as far away. She came during World War II from Boston, worked for the Navy in San Diego and then taught officer candidates at UCLA. Although both were atypical of the new California Jews (my father as a Polish Zionist; my mother as an independent woman with an advanced degree in Mathematics), they joined a young, rootless community.

Since my father was a confirmed secularist, my Jewish upbringing was not in a synagogue, but rather in the Labor Zionist group that my father founded with other would-be *halutzim* marooned in California. This group formed a kind of alternative community, celebrating holidays together and meeting for cultural and political discussions. When my Bar Mitzvah approached, my parents made a few abortive attempts to send me to synagogue

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schools, but I was by then well-inoculated against any religious education and lasted only a short time in two programs. Instead of a typical Bar Mitzvah, my father (who was an accomplished Hebraist) and I studied together and we held the Bar Mitzvah in our backyard.

When I was nine, our family spent a year in Israel and I went to school on a kibbutz. This was undoubtedly a formative experience for me and, given the direction my life has taken, probably *the* formative experience. I can still remember coming down the steps of the airplane at the Lod Airport (then, little more than a concrete shack with people waving to us from the balcony) and feeling a sudden rush of emotions, clearly imbibed from my father.

Yet, my teenage years in Los Angeles, following this sabbatical, were spent with little direct connection to anything Jewish (with the exception of my Bar Mitzvah). The West Side of LA was a very Jewish area (although my immediate neighborhood was not). Anti-Semitism was nonexistent, but so, for that matter, was any kind of sense of Jewishness as a central component in one's identity. There was a general sense of Jewish difference, which, I remember, we felt in junior high school and high school in terms of an ostensibly "innate" intellectual superiority, a feeling that we consciously shared with our Japanese-American schoolmates.

If the school year was largely devoid of anything really Jewish, the summer was different. For four summers of my adolescent years, I attended the Brandeis Camp Institute, a peculiarly Californian Jewish institution, chronicled most recently by Deborah Dash Moore in her book on Los Angeles and Miami. Under the directorship of Shlomo Bardin, a charismatic, if not very likable, Russian Jew who had lived for a time in Palestine, this camp created its own form of Judaism based on Bardin's nostalgia for the Old Country (he came from a wealthy distilling family from the same region as my maternal grandmother, who was, however, from the other side of the tracks) and a pastiche of traditions, some real and others invented. Bardin's version of Judaism always seemed to me a little suspect and I later became thoroughly disenchanted when I introduced him to my grandmother as his Landswoman, only to have him reenact the shtetl class structure by snubbing her. Nevertheless, it was at the Brandeis Camp that I found a kind of Jewish identity, not to speak of the beginnings of a social maturation which seemed impossible in the stratified and rigid atmosphere of my LA high school on the eve of the sexual revolution.

It was at the college-age camp at Brandeis in the summer of 1968 that I found a group of friends who were also going to Berkeley and wanted to create a Jewish life there. So, when I began the University of California (after an abortive freshman year at Harvard), I had an intense Jewish communal experience together with an equally intense intellectual life in the year of People's Park.

In those intoxicating days when politics and academics seemed thoroughly intertwined (we read Marx in class and Kant outside), the humanities seemed to be where the action was (I had entered Berkeley as a chemistry

major, but that wasn't destined to last long). There was a crowd of us who migrated between courses in history, political theory, and philosophy. In Carl Schorske's class on European intellectual history, I thought nothing of writing a paper on the modest subject of the individual and community in nineteenth-century thought, ending with an invocation of Beethoven's Ninth.

After a half-year interlude in Israel (where I met my future wife, Rachel, while ducking PLO shells that fell from time to time on her kibbutz), I returned to Berkeley for my senior year and hooked up with the Radical Jewish Union, an extraordinarily creative group of Jewish students, some of whom remain my closest friends to this day. In our activities and in our paper, *The Jewish Radical* (the first Jewish student newspaper), we sought to carve out a place in the New Left for a progressive Jewish identity. We were unabashed Zionists and we clashed directly with those on the Left who didn't buy our argument that Zionism was the national liberation movement of the Jewish people. But we also took on the Jewish establishment, arguing as early as 1970 that Israel should accept a Palestinian state in the occupied territories. We took up the issue of Jewish education and sat-in in the offices of the San Francisco Jewish Federation against what we took to be their assimilationist attitude towards Jewish identity. Our activities in the Radical Jewish Union were not only political: we met weekly to celebrate Shabbat and to study together. Members of the group later formed a *garin* (pioneering group) which ended up at Kibbutz Gezer (my wife and I were among the founders of the group, but dropped out before the group's *aliyah*).

It was during this time of intense Jewish activity that I began to consider wedding my academic work with my Jewish interests. In a time when we declared the personal to be political, it seemed natural to study academically the subject that concerned me most passionately outside of the classroom. My Hebrew had lapsed to a great degree, so I began to study on my own. My visits to Israel during my student years (including a one-month advanced ulpan) helped bring me up to fluency, which was relatively rare for young, secular American Jews in those days. During my senior year, I wrote a senior honors thesis on the historiography of Micha Yosef Berdichevsky, which involved breaking my teeth on some very difficult Hebrew.

I took an MA in European History at Berkeley, but in those days it was almost impossible to do serious advanced work in Jewish history in the Berkeley department. I therefore undertook a year of text work at the Hebrew University and then a doctoral program at UCLA. My work there with Amos Funkenstein still seems to me seminal in shaping my approach to the field. Those of us who took a major in Jewish history were exposed to the full range of primary and secondary sources from the Bible to modern times. More importantly, we were encouraged to believe that we could master new fields and say something original about them. The emphasis on imagination and creativity which Professor Funkenstein inculcated in us had much to do with his own character, but it fit somehow into the California atmosphere of experimentation. When we came into contact with fellow students and later colleagues from the big East Coast

centers, as well as Israel, we often felt ourselves liberated from the formalism and even rigidity which seemed to characterize those programs.

It was this encouragement to say something bold that led to my choice of Gershom Scholem as a topic for a doctoral dissertation. Here, not only Amos Funkenstein, but also Jacob Katz (then visiting at UCLA) played a role. Professor Katz, now the most senior historian in the field, was always intellectually one of the youngest. He told me of my proposal to write on Scholem: "No one in Jerusalem would dare to write it, but everyone will read it." After I had published my book on Scholem (and when I was already teaching at the State University of New York at Binghamton), I began to think of what I wanted to write about next. The new related fields of the histories of sexuality, women, and the family seemed a promising frontier for Jewish Studies (in 1980 there was still very little published in these fields). I remember interviewing Professor Scholem after the publication of my book and asking him what new fields ought to be developed in Jewish Studies, now that he had put Jewish mysticism on the map. He replied: "the history of Jewish criminals." When I told him of my new interests and he dismissed them as unimportant, I knew instinctively that the opposite had to be the case.

In the years since then, I have been fortunate to have published a book on the history of Jewish sexuality and also on Jewish attitudes towards power. In both cases, Amos Funkenstein's admonition to take on big questions that sweep across Jewish history has, for better or worse, guided me. I have also been fortunate to return to Berkeley and to participate in the building up of a major program in Jewish Studies in the place I had to leave nearly twenty-five years ago because there was no one with whom to study.

I suppose that my career path reflects a new trend in Jewish Studies. Coming from a non-religious home and acquiring my skills solely in the secular university, I believe that what I and others like me bring to the field is an immersion in the broader humanities and a willingness to challenge old verities. Yet, I have to confess to certain paradoxes as well. I never would have predicted that I would find an academic home not in a university but in a theological institution where I am called on to represent Judaism in dialogue with other traditions. This has been a very interesting and broadening challenge which, I believe, has unexpectedly enriched the way I think about questions in Jewish Studies. While my predominantly secular orientation has not changed, it has been deepened by an understanding of what religious traditions can contribute to the modern world.

My path from Los Angeles to Berkeley has been circuitous, leading repeatedly to Jerusalem and also to New York State. Certainly my encounter with Israel has been crucial to forming my identity as a secular, cultural Jew; but although I consider Israel my second home, my first remains Berkeley. Whatever perambulations this path may have taken, however, I think that it can be seen as primarily an attempt (not yet concluded) to work out the sensibility and identity of what might, indeed, be called a California Jew.

This Alien Thing That Is My Inheritance

HOWARD EILBERG-SCHWARTZ

IN ONE SENSE, MY SCHOLARLY INTEREST IN ANCIENT Judaism is a product of my struggles to formulate an adult identity. I come from what is a typical Conservative Jewish home, first in Baltimore, Maryland, later in Silver Spring and Rockville, Maryland. We attended synagogue infrequently, mostly on High Holidays. I attended Hebrew school three times a week and hated it. The crucial transition came for me in college, at Duke University, when a born-again roommate and his girlfriend tried to convert me. They remain close friends of mine, both of them now ministers in Pottstown, Pennsylvania, where they share a pulpit. Their faith like mine has subsequently matured and deepened. At that point I knew that I could not accept Christ. But when they asked me what Judaism said about matters of mutual concern, I could not answer. Their questioning and my own sense of disorientation as a young adult fueled my search for some deeper connection, for some meaning, and I turned to Judaism. I found a home in Hillel—despite my sense that it was for nerds, and that I was a jock. I also began taking Jewish studies courses. I was fortunate to have an extraordinary instructor—Kalman Bland, who introduced me to Jewish mysticism and rabbinic literature.

At that point my Jewishness and my intellectual life were in harmony. I was in search of roots, to understand this alien thing that was my inheritance, this Judaism, which I claimed as my own but knew nothing about. And intellectually what intrigued me about the tradition was its otherness. I did a research paper on the rabbis and was amazed at the liberties they took with Scripture. I was an anthropologist among my own people. But I did not know it then. Somewhere in college, I began to think about becoming what a good Jewish boy should never be: a rabbi. The idea bothered my mother, though she had always pushed me during my youth to be more Jewish. Becoming a rabbi seemed to integrate my interest in psychology, which was then my major, with my growing interests in Judaism. After much agony, and a growing period of becoming more observant, I chose rabbinical school and went off to the Jewish Theological Seminary of America. While I was happy learning how to gain access to talmudic arguments and the ancient texts, once the linguistic obstacles were overcome, I became disenchanted. For I wanted

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to *understand* the text and that meant asking: Why did people perform these rituals? Why did they produce these unusual texts? Why did they take such liberties with Scripture? I was intrigued by the strangeness of my own past. At that point, I was introduced to anthropology by another rabbinical student. "Have you read this?" he said, and handed me Claude Levi-Strauss' *The Savage Mind*, which he had studied as an undergraduate. I shortly discovered that for some time anthropologists had been puzzling over practices and beliefs similar to those of ancient Judaism, practices such as circumcision, purity rules, menstruation, sacrifice, and so forth. They were asking about the *meaning* of practices—about the symbolisms carried in practices, about how power was invested in rituals, about the ways in which they supported social relations.

These interests led me to pursue a Ph.D. in Religious Studies and the History of Judaism at Brown University. Immersing myself in anthropological inquiry, I began to ask why interpreters of Judaism—both Christian and Jewish—had tended to ignore anthropology in trying to understand Judaism? It eventually became clear to me that Western scholarship viewed Judaism as a higher tradition. Since Judaism was the foundation for Christianity and since it was monotheistic, it was assumed to be superior to primitive, or polytheistic traditions. To be sure, Judaism was always viewed as inferior to Christianity, but generally it was regarded as higher than other religious forms. This explains why so few interpreters turned to anthropology to study ancient Judaism. For the discipline of anthropology originally emerged as the way of studying so-called primitive societies. I found this distinction between higher and lower traditions morally and intellectually problematic. It is not that I believe Judaism has primitive elements and should be studied as a primitive religion. Rather, I found the whole category of "primitive" to make little sense. "How will it affect our understanding of Judaism," I asked myself, "if we no longer work on the assumption that it is a higher tradition?" To ask this kind of question was to turn upside down the dominant discourse on Judaism. Ultimately this line of thinking culminated in my book *The Savage in Judaism: An Anthropology of Ancient Judaism and Israelite Religion* (Indiana University, 1990), which attempted to explain why anthropology was rarely used to study Judaism and how anthropological perspectives could illuminate classic Jewish practices.

There is an irony in this anthropological turn in my work. Initially I was attracted to anthropology to help rehabilitate Judaism, to imbue with meaning practices that seemed nonsensical or empty. But I found that as my work progressed it alienated me in ways I did not originally anticipate. Or perhaps I should say that it was part of the alienation I was undergoing. If at first I was an anthropologist among my people, now the native had gone anthropologist. In part this was a reaction to the nature of rabbinical school. Irony of ironies: discovering one's Jewishness at Duke University only to lose touch with it in rabbinical school? I don't understand completely my growing disengagement

with traditional Jewish practice. Part of it was the claustrophobic and judgmental nature of the seminary community in which expertise (*bekios*) was valued above all else. In part, though, it was just simply a consequence of my own intellectual journey. There were no Jewish communities in which I felt completely at home.

But my alienation was also a consequence of beginning to see Judaism through the lens of gender theory. I was no longer blind to the way in which various religious symbols and practices encoded inchoate assumptions about gender, assumptions that I found problematic. In fact, I number myself among those who have been profoundly changed by the challenges of the women's movement. I am the man I am, the Jew I am, and the scholar I have become at least in part because of my interaction with feminism and the gender theory it has generated. But I did not always find gender a compelling or significant category for thinking about myself. My growing intellectual interest in gender was also developing as a result of my studies in anthropology, which always was interested in the human body and the way that the body was involved in ritual. As the body became a focus for me, as I became intrigued by circumcision and menstruation, it was inevitable to think about the way men and women were imagined in the tradition. As a man, I had had the luxury of taking my gender for granted. My struggles as a Jew were gender blind. The questions that initially led me into Jewish studies were not about gender, at least I did not perceive them as such.

I do not understand completely the complex relationship between my scholarly work on ancient Judaism and my life. To understand that relationship completely would be to get to the bottom of myself once and for all, to bring to an end a process that Freud described as interminable. But I do see quite clearly how my work is fueled by my own struggles to make sense of who I am. At various times it is difficult to know which aspect of myself is operative: is it my Jewishness, my Americanness, my maleness, the fact that I am a son, a father, a divorced man, a middle-class man, a heterosexual, born in Maryland, short, and so on. Anything we say about the relationship of life and work is itself an interpretation that itself will undergo reinterpretation.

I do not know where my journey will lead me next. But this journey of imagination and of transformation, though at times painful and difficult, has also been exciting. For me, this is what it means to lead an authentic life, one that grapples with an identity, with Torah, as a man, a Jew, a son, a father, and a child of god. I can be no one but who I am. And I feel blessed by the journey.

The Common Era: Personal Reflections on Teaching Late Antique Religions

NAOMI JANOWITZ

MY INTEREST IN JEWISH STUDIES BEGAN AS AN UNDERgraduate at Brown University. The religious studies department, and in particular Jacob Neusner, introduced me to the creativity and excitement of the Late Antique period when early Christianity and rabbinic Judaism were emerging. I remain engrossed in the first centuries of the common era, a period when Jews read the biblical stories with new questions, much as we do today, and developed stunning and influential new ways of thinking about their relationship with divinity. In those years Jews did not have the advantage of hindsight to help them figure out what would become “Judaism” and what would ultimately end up being labeled “Christianity.”

Later, as a Jew pursuing a Ph.D. in the Department of Early Christian Literature, I found myself thinking more actively about the relationship between Judaism and Christianity. There were not many choices for students wishing to study Late Antique Judaism. I had chosen this program because New Testament scholarship has been the source of many methods used in studying ancient religions and their texts. The stereotypical picture of Judaism held by many of my teachers and my fellow students matched the ignorance about the New Testament I found in the Jewish adult education classes I taught. (Ironically, in my graduate program I felt as much an outsider being a woman as being a Jew.)

As I finished my dissertation I found myself teaching at the University of Notre Dame, the only scholar of Judaism in a religious studies department of 36. To represent a complex, centuries-old tradition to an entire campus was a sobering experience, and I was on the defensive more often than I had expected. Tired of listening to attacks on the “vengeful God of the Old Testament,” I once called for the creation of a new field called Yahweh-ology, patterned on the traditional notion of the study of Mary, “Mariology,” this version directed at the liberation of the God of the Hebrew Scriptures. I found that some of my students had never met a Jew before. My favorite story then circulating on campus was the story of an undergraduate who, informed that

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Jesus had been Jewish, paused in bewilderment for a while and then stated, "Jesus may have been Jewish but the Holy Mother certainly wasn't!"

I continue my interest in adult education, now adding Christian groups to my usual Jewish audiences. There is a great thirst for learning in today's Jewish community, evident in the boom in adult education. In these settings I feel and see, in a more direct manner than in the university classroom, the benefits of reconsidering the relationship between Late Antique Judaism and early Christianity. Christians, as we saw in the case of the Notre Dame student, are fascinated, if poorly educated, about the Jewish roots of Christianity. Jews too have spent a great deal of energy, for good reason no doubt, in sidestepping the question of the relationship between Judaism and Christianity and the mutual influences. But the American Jewish community is maturing, and Jewish studies does not have to be a knee-jerk defense of Judaism. Instead adults, at least, are hungry for more sophisticated visions of Judaism over the centuries.

When I first came to the Davis campus I taught one or two courses a year in Jewish Studies, including a course on Hebrew Scriptures, which was called Old Testament (the argument being that students would not know what Hebrew Scriptures are, a view with a surprising degree of validity). This was the totality of Jewish studies on campus after a small Hebrew program was canceled when the soft money dried up. All of this has changed in the past two years and the reasons are two-fold. First, faculty interest has grown tremendously, and we now have a regularly meeting discussion group, where it turns out that many people are already doing something that can be called "Jewish studies." The other reason is that outside support has come to our aid. The Koret and Osher Foundations, the local community, and alumni are giving us the support we need to build a serious program. This year we have a new lecture series, an innovative intersegmental Hebrew program shared with Sacramento State University, and several new courses. I am coteaching with the professor of African religions a course entitled "Native and Diaspora: Judaism and African Religions." African religions have survived and adapted in diaspora settings for centuries, just as Judaism has. This offers us a valuable opportunity to compare what happens to religious traditions as they develop far from the homeland, how those in the homeland relate to their diasporic counterparts, and other issues, all of which have implications for the present communities.

Students who will not approach any other Jewish "institution" will come to these lectures and courses. Dialogue that happens no place else and is so crucial to the future of our democracy, will happen in these courses. Our small program—by far the smallest of those represented on our panel—has much to offer, not only to the university community but to the adult community at large. In turn it is the enthusiasm of the general community, translated into the vital monetary support, which will permit me to come back soon with a longer report about an even more extensive program.

Home Again?

STEVEN J. ZIPPERSTEIN

I RECALL THE MOMENT AS I BEGAN UNIVERSITY WHEN I first realized—rather astonished, actually, at the thought—that “this place exists so that people can think freely.” I had emerged a few weeks earlier from an Orthodox rabbinical seminary in Chicago where the boundaries between what was and wasn’t acceptable intellectually were stark. There I had shoved dubious books under my bed for fear of their being discovered; these books included Bernard Malamud’s novels and one of Walter Kaufmann’s interpretations of existentialism, which I recall carrying with me to yeshiva. Now, for the first time outside a parochial school, I realized I could sit myself down and read anything—out in the open—at a place created so that I, and others, could do just that. The sensation was overwhelming: a combination of freedom, anxiety, and gratitude. I can taste it still.

I now know that university life can be rather more complicated than I once assumed. Still, to this day, though, I enter a university with an overriding sense of pleasure and blessing, a measure of happy surprise that the place exists and that I am a part of it. Despite what I’ve come to learn about the vagaries of human nature, I find pettiness of mind in this setting as incongruous as my copies of Simone de Beauvoir must have appeared in the Chicago yeshiva.

What, then, to make of the apparent irony that I chose to write and teach about things Jewish? I had the world, so to speak, at my feet and yet I marched right back home.

In point of fact, even had I wished this return to my “old home” to occur (and, no doubt, there were moments when I did) it would have proven impossible. Still, as I came to understand it, my newly constructed home was shaped by the past in ways that eventually haunted and informed my work as a historian and, of course, my subsequent life as a Jew. Eventually I came to appreciate that it was precisely this tension between belief and disbelief; or to put it another way, the convergence of various, conflicting beliefs that I found most intriguing intellectually. And it was the milieu where such tensions in Jewry were the thickest, or at least the most articulate in modern times, in Russia, that came to be my primary interest as a scholar. Delmore Schwartz explains the intellectual trajectory of one of his characters in “In Dreams Begin Responsibilities,” “. . . he began to feel that he was wrong to suppose that the separation, the contempt,

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the gulf had nothing to do with his work; perhaps, on the contrary, it was the center; or perhaps it was the starting-point. . . ." That I had brushed up against such rebellion and felt its power, its complexity and (at least, in retrospect) its poignancy determined my intellectual direction as a historian of Jews.

My inclination to turn to Jewish studies once I ceased to understand Judaism in theological terms is, of course, in keeping with the trajectory of our field. Jewish studies has, since its first appearance, been unusually preoccupied with theology, especially with miracles, because its subject matter—the Jewish people—have been understood for much of recorded history in the western world primarily through the prism of miraculous stories: the Exodus, the giving of the Law, the taking of the Land, the coming of the Messiah. An important task in our field—and a surprisingly elusive one still—is to reconfigure a narrative understood previously in supernatural terms and render it comprehensible as something of this world. This remains an oddly subversive undertaking.

As specialists in Jewish culture, we study a group that for centuries in the West defined marginality: the code word for parochialism, literalism, for Pharisees. To redefine this culture and its history—to recast it from stereotype, to reclaim its integrity without apologetics remains, as I see it, the primary task of Jewish studies. Some aspects of our culture, preeminently the Holocaust (this, arguably, the one best suited to older, christological notions of Jewry) have found their way into the larger intellectual world; most remain outside and it is our task to write and teach things Jewish in such a way that they become part and parcel of what an intelligent person needs to understand the world. We must construct a Jewish studies that exists in a larger intellectual frame; at the same time erode the artificial, bland juxtapositions that suppose that those who think big (Freud, Kafka) belong to the world, those of a more modest intellectual girth remain with the tribe. The interrelationship between world and tribe, nation and people, Jewish and universal is immeasurably more nuanced. "Yet writing what you know has nothing to do with security. What is more dangerous?" asks Eudora Welty.

Yaakov Glatstein once quipped, "What is a Yiddish poet? A Yiddish poet is someone who reads Auden but Auden doesn't read him." Our task, at least one of our tasks as interpreters of Jewish culture, is to render with sufficient authority and intelligence what is most compelling in Jewish life as to make someone who does not read Glatstein parochial. This goal, as I see it, is central to the agenda of the journal *Jewish Social Studies*, which I now edit; and it informs the undergraduate and graduate programs in Jewish studies at Stanford, which I direct.

I gain sustenance from those in the past whose frustrations and achievements, whose limitations and biases, whose relationship to community and work help me to contextualize my own. Like them, I sit scribbling, writing about what I love most and what is most unsettling, which, if you're doing what you should, amounts to much the same thing.

Judaism and Nature: Theological and Moral Issues to Consider While Renegotiating a Jewish Relationship to the Natural World

E I L O N S C H W A R T Z

SINCE THE ADVENT OF THE MODERN ENVIRONMENTAL movement some thirty years ago,¹ dozens of articles have been written exploring the relationship of Judaism and the environment, attempting to articulate a Jewish response to the environmental crisis.² Many of the articles came in the wake of the environmental movement's attack on the Judeo-Christian ethic, whose biblical injunction to "fill the earth and master it" was seen by many in the environmental movement to be the theological and ethical source for an anthropocentric and ultimately exploitative relationship to the natural world.³

Articles were also written to defend tradition, often by presenting Judaism's environmental credentials. Although translations of Jewish culture into terms acceptable to the larger cultural milieu have often sacrificed authentic Jewish perspectives at the altar of cultural relevance, in the case of Judaism and the environment it seemed as though no trade-off was necessary.⁴ Finding "green" traditions within Jewish sources is not difficult. Such traditions are strongly anchored in normative Judaism. *Bal taschchit, tzar baalei chayim, shnat Shemita, yishuv haaretz*, to name a few of the Jewish value-concepts⁵ most often quoted by environmentally concerned Jews, are all pointed to as representing authentic Jewish environmental perspectives.⁶ As they are.

Still, the need to validate a Jewish environmental ethic, to show Judaism's credentials, as it were, stifled a true airing of Jewish positions.⁷ Judaism's relationship with the natural world is far more ambivalent than that with which many Jewishly committed environmentalists would feel comfortable. Too few have delved into the complex and intricate relationship between Judaism and the natural world, a relationship which, while containing the "green" traditions often quoted, also contains the admonition in Pirkei Avot that

One, who while walking along the way, reviewing his studies, breaks off from his study and says, "How beautiful is that tree! How beautiful is that plowed

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field!" Scripture regards him as if he has forfeited his soul. (Ethics of the Fathers, 3:7)*

For Jews to confront the environmental crisis as part of a rich and complex Jewish tradition, it is necessary to come to terms with both sides of the tradition and to understand the interrelationship between them. Only by understanding the theological, philosophical, and moral concerns which are an integral part of the Jewish relationship with nature can Jews offer a voice that will not simply mimic already articulated perspectives, but will offer unique attitudes to help guide the task of *tikkun olam* while confronting issues too long avoided by Jewish thought.

By surveying the literature previously written on Judaism and the environment, I hope to influence the direction of future writing by pointing to places that need exploration. My not-so-hidden agenda is to reassert the *Jewish* perspective in the encounter between Judaism and the environment, with the conviction that a Jewish contribution to the growing debate on environmental ethics can only come from a response strongly rooted in all the ambivalences and ambiguities of the Jewish relationship to the natural world. Perhaps even more importantly, I believe that the reevaluation by the environmental movement of our modern cultural relationship to the natural world, which challenges some of the basic values of our modern culture, deeply confronts ingrained trends in Jewish thought, as well. To engage the points of tension, and not only the points of confluence, will facilitate a dialogue from within the tradition that can lead to a reawakening of the natural world as a central category in our Jewish understanding of what we mean by both the human and the Divine.

Paganism and Judaism

Any serious confrontation of the Jewish relationship with the natural world must confront the Jewish relationship with paganism. The conventional wisdom of modern Jewish thought maintains that Judaism came about as a radical distancing of the Holy from immanence within the world.⁸ In this account, idolatry is defined theologically as viewing God as being contained within the material world, whereas Judaism came to assert the transcendental, wholly other nature of the Holy. Paganism, both in its biblical and Hellenistic manifestations, understood God as being contained within Nature. Jewish monotheism distanced the Holy from paganism and its concept of nature.

Such a presentation of the Jewish relationship to nature by way of its polemic against pagan idolatry suggests an antagonism to nature, and the theological affinity between paganism and Nature. Indeed, the modern environmental movement is filled with writings that have picked up on such a reading, calling for a rejection of monotheistic approaches to the world, and a rebirth of paganism. Lynn White sees paganism as the alter-ego to the Judeo-

* See Jeremy Benstein, "'One, Walking and Studying . . .': Nature vs. Torah," *JUDAISM*, Vol. 44, No. 2 (Spring 1995).

Christian theologically sanctioned exploitation of nature;⁹ some ecofeminists have called for a renewal of pagan customs of May Day, celebrations of the moon, and witchcraft;¹⁰ one of the more radical biological theories of our day holds that the earth is a living organism, and has named her Gaia, the name of the Greek earth goddess.¹¹ This reassertion of pagan theologies, customs, and language understands paganism as a world view which sees Nature as Holy. Eastern religions are often included in the list of religions of Nature, as well, with the many significant theological and cultural differences between the various historical cultures glossed over. These are juxtaposed to an archetypical monotheism which sees God as transcending nature. The operative conclusions are clear: paganism, seeing Nature as sacred, respects the natural world; monotheism, desanctifying nature, abuses it. The rebirth of paganism is a call for the assertion of the natural over the supernatural, Mother Earth over Father King, holistic Nature over the hierarchical dichotomy of Heaven and earth.

Aharon Lichtenstein, writing about Judaism's approach to nature, accepts this typology, as well.¹² While not reaching the operative conclusion that Judaism abuses nature while paganism respects it, he certainly accepts the theological distinction of a monotheism that sets God apart from by contrast with the linking of paganism with present environmentalism. Lichtenstein indeed holds much of the environmental movement, which views nature as Holy, to be idolatrous. And while there might be some practical commonality in action conceivable for a time between the two in order to respond to the immediate manifestations of the environmental crisis, the theological (and what may be assumed, moral) gulf between them is no different than that between Judaism and Greco-Roman paganism.

Everett Gendler can be seen as representing the other end of the continuum of modern Jewish responses to the "pagan" critique by the environmental movement.¹³ Gendler holds that there is a latent nature tradition within Judaism, a tradition suppressed due to the ancient polemic with paganism, exile from the land of Israel, and subsequent historical forces. Gendler sees this tradition expressing itself in the nature motifs of Jewish festivals, in female rituals surrounding the blessing of the new moon, and in the reassertion of connection to nature in the Zionist movement. Judaism has suffered due to its exile from the natural world; it is time to reassert the role of nature in our understanding of the human spirit.

Gendler is, in effect, asserting a place for an immanent religious tradition within Judaism. Both he and Lichtenstein accept the idea that a relationship with the natural world has tremendous implications for the life of the spirit: Lichtenstein holds Jewish religious life to be transcendental and apart from the natural world, while Gendler believes Jewish religious life has always had a place for a complementary model¹⁴ of spirituality contained within the relationship of the Jew to the natural world.¹⁵

Lamm elaborates on the content of our continuum by presenting a range of authentic Jewish relationships to nature whose poles he defines by the Hasidic/

Mitnagdim controversy.¹⁶ Hasidut, while “utterly different” from pagan thought, nevertheless also had manifestations that affirmed the holiness of nature. Such views, most pronounced in Beshtian Hasidism, but present throughout the Kabbalistic tradition, held that the spirit of the Creator is immanent in the Creation, and thus God can be approached through the natural world. While this is different from saying that God *is* the natural world, a pantheistic/paganistic approach, it does suggest eliminating the hierarchical differences between sacred and profane, and recognizing the theological possibility of the sacred in the profane. From here it is a short distance to antinomian beliefs and behavior, and to seeing Holiness in the most profane of actions. Nevertheless, Hasidut remained safely within the halachic structure, perhaps partially because of realizing the dangerous antinomian tendencies inherent in such belief.

The Mitnagdic school of the Vilna Gaon, also rooted in the Kabbalist tradition, believed that Hasidut had indeed begun to cross the normative halachic framework. The Mitnagdim re-emphasized the transcendence of God from the point of view of the human being, and separated holiness from the world, “allowing for the exploitation of nature by science and technology.”¹⁷ Halacha, on this side of the pole, acts to prevent ecological abuse in a philosophical system that otherwise legitimates it. In short, the Hasidic tradition came dangerously close to turning the world into the sacred, the Mitnagdim dangerously close to removing Divine presence from the world.

For Lamm, there is a dynamic tension between the two approaches: created in God’s image, the human being is both part of the natural world but also transcends it. Living with the paradox of the two approaches, without compromising either, is what it means to be human. Extrapolating from such a view, paganism and its environmental supporters err on the side of the natural in the human; modern Western culture on the side of the transcendent. Judaism has traditionally offered a plurality of approaches, each moving dangerously close to the extremes, but with safeguards to insure remaining within acceptable boundaries. Gendler, using Lamm’s terminology, represents the Hasidic tradition; Lichtenstein, the mitnagdic tradition.

Lamm never addresses the question of where Judaism’s modern variations stand on his continuum, perhaps suggesting that such a creative tension continues to exist between various modern Jewish approaches. Schorsch contends that, in response to intellectual currents in the larger cultural setting, modern Judaism was pushed beyond Lamm’s mitnagdic pole:

We must dare to reexamine our longstanding preference for history over nature. The celebration of “historical monotheism” is a legacy of nineteenth century Christian-Jewish polemics, a fierce attempt by Jewish thinkers to distance Judaism from the world of paganism. But the disclaimer has its downside by casting Judaism into an adversarial relationship with the natural world. Nature is faulted for the primitiveness and decadence of pagan religion, and the modern Jew is saddled with a reading of his tradition that is one-dimensional. Judaism has been made to dull our sensitivity to the awe inspiring power of nature. Preoccupied with

the ghosts of paganism, it appears indifferent and unresponsive to the supreme challenge of our age: man's degradation of the environment. Our planet is under siege and we as Jews are transfixed in silence.¹⁸

For Schorsch, modern Jewish historians projected a distance between Judaism and the pagan world that is overstated. This modern version of a "one-dimensional" Judaism is a distortion of the reality of premodern Jewish thought and life.

If Schorsch is correct that the pagan taboo has contributed significantly to the lack of a healthy Jewish relationship with nature, in which I concur, then only by coming to terms with the content of the conflict can we avoid "throwing out the baby with the bath water." In order to rethink our relationship to nature, or to re-search our traditional relationship with nature, without committing the same transgression of interpreting Judaism solely according to the cultural milieu of the day—historical monotheism then, the emerging environmental movement now—the Jewish relationship with paganism needs to be reexplored.¹⁹ The taboo against paganism in Jewish thought is so deep, and the linkage between paganism and nature is so taken for granted, that to seek to distance ourselves from paganism has meant distancing ourselves from nature, and conversely, any attempt to reconcile Judaism with nature appears to flirt with paganism. Only by exploring the content of the antipagan Jewish polemic can we hope to understand what is truly at stake.²⁰

Living in fear of paganism has not only exacted a heavy price on the Jewish relationship with nature. Feminists have argued that the cultural linking of nature with female has meant that a distancing of culture from nature is linked to a distancing of culture from its feminine components.²¹ Judaism's fear of paganism, therefore, has potentially led to a distancing of Judaism from its feminine components. The dominance of male God-imagery and masculine formulations of theology over the centuries can be viewed as one outcome of the fear of paganism. Loss of humility through the loss of our ability to wonder and experience awe at the beauty and vastness of the natural world is another. And losing our sense of place, of being a part of the world is still another. To confront the byproducts, it is essential that the root of the debate between pagan and Jewish culture be confronted. And that debate has much to do with how we understand morality.

Time's Arrows, Time's Cycles

The Jewish polemic against paganism was not only theological but primarily moral. The theological conflict had deep moral implications. Nature worship was seen not simply as a theological/philosophical mistake, but a world view with deep immoral consequences. Schorsch's caution that we not blame nature for pagan excesses notwithstanding, it seems essential to explore what the moral conflict was while we are renegotiating our relationship with the natural world.

Mircea Eliade offers a helpful distinction between the different notions of time of historical religions and nature religions.²² Eliade maintains that religions focusing on history have a linear view of time, those focusing on nature, a cyclical view—what Stephen Jay Gould calls time's arrows and cycles.²³ Eliade holds that Judaism was responsible for contributing a linear sense of history to the world, that is, a progressive sense of history.²⁴ While positing history as change, in fact, while creating the very possibility for history, such a perspective, when not counterbalanced with a sense of cyclic time, can lead to history without a sense of purpose. So Eliade sees our modern period.²⁵ Linear history, with its beginning and end, needs to be understood in terms of cyclical history, with its transcendent and repeating truths. Or in Jewish terms, the march forward of Egypt to Sinai to Zion must be understood in terms of our continual return to Egypt, Sinai, and Zion in each generation. Time has both its arrows and cycles.

While Eliade believes that the modern period lives in the moral danger of losing sight of the purpose of history through losing a sense of time's cycles, the moral critique works in the other direction as well. An overemphasis on time's cycles can lead to a history without change. Time is understood only in terms of the natural cycles of the world. Seasons come and go, the sun rises and sets, and change is illusory. Time stands still. A sense of history demands that human beings break out of the cycle, and accept the responsibility of a history which can move forward and backward. Time's cycle is connected with what is, time's arrows—with what can be. Focusing on a religion of nature, one focuses on the cyclical nature of time. A religion of history offers the moral responsibility that is the meaning of its arrows. While Eliade holds that arrows without cycles leads to a history without meaning, an emphasis on arrows has often been understood to mean an emphasis on human responsibility.

Schwartzchild understands the pagan-Jewish debate as exactly one of differing views of nature coupled with different views of morality.²⁶ Nature represents what is. Morality is born in the question of what ought to be. Judaism is profoundly at odds with the natural world, which functions according to certain laws to which history is then subject. Judaism sees the human being as transcending those laws of nature, with the power to impose a moral order on an otherwise amoral natural reality. Through human judgment between "good" and "evil," that which makes the human "in the image of God," moral thought can impose its order on the natural disorder, completing the process of creation.²⁷ Schwartzchild recognizes that the tradition is not monolithic in this regard. The "heretical, quasi-pantheistic tendency" found expression in medieval Kabbalah, Hasidut, and modern Zionism.²⁸ However, this view remained a tangential idea, contrary to the traditional Jewish perspective on nature.

Wyschogrod follows Schwartzchild's argument.²⁹ The heart of the pagan-Jewish controversy is the moral question of whether what is, should be. And Wyschogrod, like Schwartzchild, sees the modern environmental movement as resurrecting the pagan notion of morality as equated with the world as it is. While there are certainly many environmentalists who understand the need for change

in anthropocentric terms—the need to protect our health and the earth’s resources for future generations—“deep” environmentalists subscribe to what Wyschogrod calls “the higher ecology,” an environmentalism which attempts to shift our culture from an anthropocentric to a geo/biocentric world view.

Wyschogrod contends that Adolf Hitler and the Nazi movement were deeply influenced by such a perspective.³⁰ Borrowing heavily from Nietzsche, Hitler believed that nature teaches us the basic laws of morality: that the strong kill the weak and through such a process, nature moves forward. Wyschogrod notes that “Evolutionary morality is the right of the stronger to destroy the weaker. Nature wants the weak to perish. The weak contribute to the march of evolution by perishing; and when they refuse to perish, then the weaker have triumphed over the stronger.”³¹

However, Judaism (and Christianity) interfere with the natural order by letting the weak survive.³² A morality which changes the natural order prevents nature from taking its rightful course. Such a perspective on morality Wyschogrod also locates in Plato. In his ideal state, modeled after an organism, there is no place for protection of the weak. Imperfectly born infants are to be disposed of.

Of course, attempting to understand morality as an outgrowth of the natural order does not necessarily demand understanding morality as “survival of the fittest.” Nature’s lessons were interpreted in radically different ways by its social Darwinist interpreters.³³ But, regardless of the particular interpretation of nature’s morality, there is a categorical difference between a morality based on the natural order, however that “natural order” is understood, and a morality based on values whose source is outside of materialist understandings of the world. And in the confrontation between the morality of “the world as it is” and “the world as it should be,” both Wyschogrod and Schwartzchild understand Judaism as the flagship of a morality that imposes itself on the natural order.

Yet, in spite of his antagonism to a “higher ecology,” Wyschogrod acknowledges that the moral philosophy of Judaism, which demanded the desacralization of nature, has contributed to the destruction of nature. Returning to a religion of nature is profoundly dangerous, yet, given that, a reconsideration of the human interconnection with the natural is demanded by the ecological crisis.

Wyschogrod’s articulation of the link between a religion of nature and an ethics in which what “is” is defined as what “ought” to be, finds expression in the environmental movement. Indeed, the burgeoning field of environmental ethics continues to confront the question of whether ethics are learned from the natural order. In the debate between animal protectionists and deep ecologists, one of the main points of conflict is whether the interests of the individual should take precedence over the needs of the community. For example, should a herd of deer that overpopulate an area due to the extinction of its local predators be hunted in order to protect the flora that they eat, which, as the primary producers in the energy chain, maintain the health of the ecosystem as a whole? Animal protectionists abhor the idea of hunting as the unnecessary

suffering of sentient beings. Some environmentalists have supported hunting at least potentially as part of the laws of nature which maintain the health and well-being of the ecosystem. Some have tended to idealize hunting as a return to the primal state of the human being, a return to the natural world, and have criticized what is popularly called “the Bambi syndrome”—the projection of a human code of morality onto the workings of the natural world.³⁴ Aldo Leopold, a forerunner of biocentric environmental ethicists, taught the need to learn to “think like a mountain,” to think like nature.³⁵

The implications for all of this in terms of human existence has been one of the most sensitive subjects of environmental ethics. Parts of the “deep” ecology movement, notably the Earth First! movement, have expressed what Schwartzchild and Wyschogrod’s interpretation would suggest: “Some Earth First!ers, who are supposedly motivated by deep ecological ideals, proposed Draconian birth control measures, spoke approvingly of AIDS as a self-protective reaction of Gaia against an overpopulating humanity, used social Darwinist metaphors, and displayed apparent racist attitudes. Earth First! cofounder Dave Foreman even stated that humans ‘are a cancer on nature.’”³⁶

The ideas expressed by a particular part of a movement should in no way be chosen to reflect the thoughts of the movement as a whole. Nevertheless, the predictive ability of Schwartzchild and Wyschogrod’s thesis forces us to recognize the danger inherent in philosophies currently prevalent in the environmental movement, which foreground moral questions that have been part of the internal environmental debate for over a decade.³⁷

The response to such a morality of nature need not be a denial of the place of the natural within Jewish world views. Ehrenfeld and Bentley,³⁸ for example, while understanding Judaism as having a strong anthropocentric component, maintain that “the great chain of being”³⁹ does not place man at the pinnacle, but rather God. The human place in the God-given scheme of things is caring for God’s creation, the role of steward. It is the secularization of the world, the removal of God from the hierarchy and placing the human being at its pinnacle, which results in what Ehrenfeld calls “the arrogance of humanism.”⁴⁰ The stewardship argument is heard often in the environmental ethic debate, changing the perspective from anthropocentric to theocentric.⁴¹ It is but one attempt to deal with the tension between a hierarchical model of creation and an egalitarian model. The former sees the human being as primarily a spiritual being standing apart from the natural world while the latter sees the human being as a material being existing as part of her. Reducing our understanding of human purpose to a material, deterministic view of the world has been shown to be a problematic option. But the environmental movement has suggested that a view of human purpose which ignores the material base of human existence is equally problematic. The dualistic notion of the world which sees human purpose in that which differentiates the human from the rest of creation, implicitly devalues the material, natural side of human existence. Boyarin claims that such a spiritual/material dichotomy was never part of normative Rabbinic Jewish thought.⁴² The

Jewish emphasis on the body as a category of spiritual existence suggests the need for a far more complex understanding of the interrelationship of the material and spiritual. Any reassessment of the Jewish relation to nature demands a reevaluation of the interrelationship of the spiritual and the material, including the possibility of foregoing such a dichotomy altogether.⁴³ In answering Disraeli's question whether the human being is ape or angel, emphasizing our affinity to the world of the ape need not by definition distance us from the spiritual. It might even bring us closer.

The environmental crisis offers both a challenge and an opportunity to modern Judaism. All cultures will be judged in future generations by the depth of their response. A Judaism that refuses to respond through its unique language to modernity's spiritually bankrupt relationship to God's world will be judged for its silence. This is also an opportunity, because far too often Judaism has been forced to speak within the narrow confines offered. The environmental crisis challenges modern culture, and offers the opportunity for other voices, long delegitimized, to reassert themselves within the larger culture. Speaking from within the tradition, and confronting the manifold challenges that a reappraisal of Judaism and nature demands, means a renewal of our relationship with our world. It means evaluating how we relate to the world around us, but no less importantly, how that world around us touches our lives. The environmental crisis is not only a crisis of technology, nor a crisis of human values, but most assuredly also a crisis of the human spirit. How we respond to the challenge and opportunity that the environmental crisis presents has implications not only with how we deal with our world, but also with how we deal with ourselves, our fellow human beings, and our God. This is the context in which a Jewish articulation of an environmental ethic must be considered.

NOTES

1. Traditionally understood as 1960, the year of the initial publication of portions of Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* in *The New Yorker*.

2. Marc Swetlitz (ed.), *Judaism and Ecology 1970-1986: A Sourcebook of Readings* (Wyncote, PA: Shomrei Adamah, 1990).

3. Lynn White, Jr., "The Historical Roots of Our Ecologic Crisis" (*Science* 155 (March 10, 1967): 1203-07), remains the classic presentation of this position. See Jeremy Cohen, "On Classical Judaism and Environmental Crisis (*Tikkun*, Volume 5, No. 2) for a review of the early environmental movement's polemic against the Judeo-Christian ethic.

4. Scholem's resurrection of the field of Kabbalah as a legitimate part of Jewish tradition is not simply a rediscovery of historically prominent trends within Judaism, but marks a change both in the larger culture's mood, as well as a change in the relationship between Judaism and the larger culture.

5. On the justification for extrapolating universal values from particular discussions in Rabbinic thought, see Max Kadushin, *The Rabbinic Mind* (Philadelphia: The Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1952), pp. 1-58.

6. On *bal tashchit* see David Ehrenfeld and Philip J. Bentley, "Judaism and the Practice of Stewardship" (*JUDAISM*, 34 (1985): 301-11); Eric Freudenstein, "Ecology and the Jewish Tradition"

- (JUDAISM, 19 (1970): 406–14); Robert Gordis, "Judaism and the Spoliation of Nature" (*Congress Bi-Weekly*, April 2, 1971); Jonathan I. Helfand, "Ecology and the Jewish Tradition: A Postscript" (JUDAISM, 20 (1971): 330–35); Norman Lamm, "Ecology and Jewish Law and Theology," in *Faith and Doubt* (New York: Ktav, 1971). On *tzar baalei chayim* see Ehrenfeld and Bentley; Gordis. On *yishuv haaretz* see Helfand. On *shnat Shemita* see Gerald J. Blidstein, "Man and Nature in the Sabbatical Year" (*Tradition*, 8 (1966): 48–55); Ehrenfeld and Bentley, *The Sabbatical Year - Holiness or Social Welfare?*, The Hartman Institute for Jewish Studies [Hebrew Publication].
7. A similar argument is made by Bradley Shavit Artson, "Our Covenant with Stones: A Jewish Ecology of Earth" (*Conservative Judaism*, Vol. 44, No. 1 [Fall 1991]).
8. Yehezkel Kaufman, *The Religion of Israel* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1960), pp. 1–148.
9. White, "The Historical Roots," p.1205.
10. Starhawk, "Power, Authority, and Mystery: Ecofeminism and Earth-based Spirituality," in Irene Diamond and Gloria Feman Orenstein (eds.), *Reweaving the World: The Emergence of Ecofeminism* (San Francisco: Sierra Club Books, 1990).
11. James Lovelock, *The Ages of Gaia: A Biography of Our Living Earth* (New York: Bantam Books, 1990).
12. Aharon Lichtenstein, "Man and Nature: Social Aspects," in *Judaism in Our Modern Society* (Israeli Ministry of Education: The Branch for Religious Culture, 1971 [Hebrew Publication]).
13. Everett Gendler, "On the Judaism of Nature," in James A. Sleeper and Alan L. Mintz (eds.), *The New Jews* (New York: Random House, 1971). See also "The Earth's Covenant" (*The Reconstructionist*, November-December 1989) for a restatement of his views.
14. The idea of complementary models, mutually exclusive models which describe parts of the same reality, was originally presented by Niels Bohr. For a discussion of Bohr's theory and its implications for religious thought, see Ian Barbour, *Myths, Models and Paradigms: A Comparative Study in Science and Religion* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1974), pp. 71–92.
15. Michael Rosenak, "On Ways and Visions: The Theological and Educational Thought of Irving Greenberg" (*The Melton Journal*, Spring 1992). The environmental movement is, among other agendas, a call for the reassertion of the Rosenzweigian category of creation in theological discussion. Such a model is helpful in understanding some of the subtle ways environmentalism is in tension with traditional Jewish categories. I believe that the environmental crisis offers an opportunity for a reasserting of Creation theologies, while having no effect on the larger culture's openness to theologies of Revelation. Arthur Green's recently published elegant presentation of his own theology is an excellent example of such a tendency. I hold it to be largely a theology of creation, strongly influenced by environmental themes. Arthur Green, *Seek My Face, Speak My Name: A Contemporary Jewish Theology* (Northvale, NJ: Jason Aronson, Inc., 1992).
16. Norman Lamm, "Ecology and Jewish Law and Theology," in *Faith and Doubt* (New York: Ktav, 1971), pp. 173–77.
17. Lamm, p.177.
18. Ismar Schorsch, "Tending to our Cosmic Oasis" (*The Melton Journal*, Spring 1991), taken from his "The Limits of History," in "Proceedings of the 1989 Rabbinical Assembly Convention."
19. See Carolyn Merchant, "Epilogue: The Global Ecological Revolution," in her *Ecological Revolutions* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1989).
20. See Levenson's challenge to Yehezkiel Kaufmann's antimythical portrayal of ancient Israel in his "Yehezkiel Kaufmann and Mythology" (*Conservative Judaism*, Vol. 36(2) [Winter 1982]).
21. For the classic anthropological presentation, see Sherry B. Ortner, "Is Female to Male as Nature is to Culture," in Michelle Rosaldo and Louise Lamphere (eds.), *Woman, Culture, and Society* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1974). For a variety of perspectives in the environmental movement, see Diamond and Orenstein (eds.), *Reweaving the World: The Emergence of Ecofeminism*. Also, Carolyn Merchant's, *The Death of Nature* (San Francisco: Harper and Row Publishers, 1980).
22. Mircea Eliade, *Cosmos and History: The Myth of the Eternal Return* (New York: Harper and Row, 1959).
23. Stephen Jay Gould, *Time's Arrow, Time's Cycle: Myth and Metaphor in the Discovery of Geological Time* (London: Penguin Books, 1988).

24. Eliade, p.104.
25. Eliade, p.151.
26. Steven S. Schwartzchild, "The Unnatural Jew" (*Environmental Ethics*, 6 (1984): 347-62).
27. In Midrash Tanhuma, Parshat Tizroah, there is, for example, the exchange between the Roman General Turnisrufus and Rabbi Akiva. When asked whether God's creation or human creation is superior, Akiva anticipates the challenge to the Jewish practice of circumcision, and argues for the superiority of human actions, in that they complete the unfinished work of creation. Thus even the human body, perfect in Greek-Roman aesthetic perception, is born imperfect, so that the Jew through mitzvot can participate in acts of creation.
28. No one articulated the pagan sympathies of some Zionist thought better than Saul Tschernichovsky. See Saul Tschernichovsky, "Before a Statue of Apollo," in *Saul Tschernichovsky* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1968), pp. 97-98. See also the chapters "Proto-Judaism," pp. 36-41, and "Fusion of Judaism and Hellenism," pp. 41-52 in the same volume.
29. Michael Wyschogrod, "Judaism and the Sanctification of Nature" (*The Melton Journal* (Spring 1992): 6-7).
30. For an elaboration of the connection between Nazism and nature see Robert A. Pois, *National Socialism and the Religion of Nature* (London: Croon Helm, 1986). Pois sees a direct connection between Nazi ideology's pagan beliefs and Nazi Germany's policies.
31. Wyschogrod, "Judaism," p.7.
32. Wyschogrod and Schwartzchild differ in their evaluation of Christianity's position on morality and nature. Wyschogrod sees Christianity as a partner in the Jewish polemic against a nature morality. Schwartzchild believes that Christianity is to be found on the pagan end of the moral divide.
33. Antonello La Vergata, "Images of Darwin: A Historiographic Overview," in David Kohn (ed.), *The Darwinian Heritage* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985), pp. 958-962. Robert M. Young, "Darwinism Is Social," in Kohn (ed.), *The Darwinian Heritage*.
34. "The Bambi syndrome" is named for the Disney movie *Bambi*, in which the natural world is pictured as an idyllic Eden save for the encroachment of human beings. It refers to the human misconception of nature as peaceful and nonviolent as a result of viewing nature as *Bambi* portrays her, and thus the misplaced repulsion of many people to hunting. See Matt Cartmill, *A View to a Death in the Morning: Hunting and Nature through History* (Boston: Harvard University Press, 1993.)
35. Aldo Leopold, *The Sand County Almanac* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1949), p.129.
36. Michael Zimmerman explores the link between Heidegger, his Nazi sympathies, and the deep ecology movement. Heidegger has been portrayed as a forerunner of deep ecology. Zimmerman, by acknowledging the philosophical link between Heidegger and National Socialism, confronts the need to disassociate deep ecology from those philosophical assumptions of Heidegger's thought which lead to sympathy for Nazism. See Michael E. Zimmerman, "Rethinking the Heidegger-Deep Ecology Relationship" (*Environmental Ethics*, Vol. 13 (Fall 1993): 205).
37. The debate between social ecology and deep ecology essentially centers around this moral question. For the social ecology position, see Murray Bookchin, "Why This Book Was Written," in *Remaking Society: Pathways to a Green Future* (Boston: South End Press, 1990).
38. David Ehrenfeld and Philip J. Bentley, "Judaism and the Practice of Stewardship" (*JUDAISM*, 34:301-11).
39. Arthur O. Lovejoy, *The Great Chain of Being* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1964).
40. David Ehrenfeld, *The Arrogance of Humanism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1981).
41. Wendell Berry, "The Gift of Good Land," in his collection of essays *The Gift of Good Land* (San Francisco: North Point Press, 1981), pp. 267-81. Berry's poetic piece, defending the Judeo-Christian land ethic from White's frontal attack, is a classic of environmental theology.
42. Daniel Boyarin, *Carnal Israel: Reading Sex in Talmudic Culture* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993).
43. Mary Midgely, *Beast and Man: The Roots of Human Nature* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1978).

Rosenzweig's Rebbe Halevi: From the Academy to the Yeshiva

RICHARD A. COHEN

TO THOSE WHO KNEW HIM, OR TO THOSE WHO READ HIS works or read about him, Rosenzweig's short life has always meant more than a chronology of dates, facts, or publications.¹ Indeed, his life is often discussed in hagiographic tones. The seven, final, bedridden years of almost total paralysis, during which Rosenzweig maintained and even enriched an unflagging and productive commitment to Judaism, completing his translations of Halevi and working with Buber, are certainly the stuff of legend. My purpose, however, is to pursue his intellectual and spiritual growth, which together make sense of a life's most concrete movements, decisions, and relations.

For Rosenzweig, as for many of the twentieth century's Western religious seekers, it was education that guided his spiritual development. This meant moving from the demanding intellectual and spiritual commitments of university education, to the no less demanding commitments of life within a religious community. To learn the meaning of Jewish religious life meant turning to Judah Halevi, the great medieval Jewish poet and thinker. Rosenzweig's study, translation, and commentary upon the religious poems and hymns of Halevi (born c. 1080) represent the culmination of his impressive European education, and the final stage of his self-education as a religiously observant Jew.

There is no topic to which Franz Rosenzweig devoted more attention, as a person or in his writings, than that of education and Jewish education. Like many of his privileged compatriots in the German Jewish bourgeoisie, he was a student of Germany's gymnasium and university system. After completing his doctoral dissertation in 1912 on the development of Hegel's political thought, published as *Hegel and the State* in 1920, Rosenzweig could easily have embarked on the university career that beckoned to him. Instead, as we know, he chose another path: a career in Jewish adult education.²

In writing the narrative of Rosenzweig's life and thought, scholars (especially Nahum Glatzer) have highlighted two closely related events of 1913, both central to his relation to Christianity. I want to add this third no less decisive event: Rosenzweig's rejection of a promising university career and his acceptance of an appointment as director of the *Lehrhaus*, the Free House of Jewish Learning in Frankfurt. This third turning point led him away from the

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work of the Western university, encapsulated in *Hegel and the State*, but also in the essentially apologetic work of leave-taking, *The Star of Redemption* (1921), to the fuller Jewish life that produced his two volumes of Halevi translations and commentaries (1924, 1927). This work was the result of his complete engagement in Jewish learning and communal life.

Conversations with Rosenstock: From Relativism to Christianity

First there is the famous conversation of July 7, 1913, with Eugen Rosenstock, the culmination of several conversations with Rosenstock on the topic of truth, philosophy, and religion. What is decisive about this conversation has two dimensions, one negative, the other positive, though they are two sides of a single new appreciation for the subordination of philosophy to religion. On the negative side, Rosenstock persuades Rosenzweig of the untenability of his or any skeptical relativism.³ On the positive side, Rosenstock does so in the name of a religious absolute, more specifically, in the name of Christian faith. Persuaded to give up his skeptical relativism, and under the influence of Rosenstock's (himself a convert) commitment to Christianity, Rosenzweig believes that he too, like Rosenstock, and like his cousin Rudolf Ehrenberg before him, can only make good on his new found appreciation for religion by converting to the Christian faith.

Rosenzweig was no doubt influenced by Hegel's reading of history. His decision to convert to Christianity depended not only on the logic and faith of Rosenstock but also on his own conviction, shored up by Hegelian philosophy, that the *zeitgeist* of all of modern Europe was essentially Christian, regardless whether one identifies with the *ecclesia* (like Rosenstock and Ehrenberg); or with the *seculum*, through the sciences, humanities, or arts (as he himself had done); or through the power of the State, as did many others. After studying Hegel for a little more than a year with Professor Heinrich Rickert at Freiburg, and four years before his own decision to convert in 1913, Rosenzweig had supported his cousin Hans Ehrenberg's decision to convert to Christianity. Explaining his reasoning to his parents, Rosenzweig writes on November 6, 1909: "We are Christian in everything. We live in a Christian state, attend Christian school, read Christian books, in short, our whole 'culture' rests entirely on a Christian foundation; consequently a man who has nothing holding him back needs only a very slight push . . . to make him accept Christianity."⁴

With "nothing to hold him back," conversion to Christianity would be a forthright acknowledgment of the implicit truth that Hegelian philosophy had already made objectively explicit a century earlier, namely, that modern Europe, and hence modern Europeans, regardless of overt profession, are essentially Christian.

This Hegelian reading of European history is based on a philosophical appropriation and conceptual reinterpretation of Judaism into mainstream Christian historical self-understanding. This version of Christianity understood

itself not simply as a new and different religion from Judaism, indebted to Judaism for various forms and ideas, to be sure, but rather as a further and higher development of Judaism itself. It was the new Israel. Such supersessionism was a development, furthermore, which, this argument insisted, historical Judaism to its eternal discredit and shame had shirked in the first centuries of the common era and on up to the present day: the spiritual validity of Judaism would be only that of a preparation for Christianity. Hence all the vast literature of rabbinic Judaism would count for nothing, would be an empty and stubborn casuistry. Judaism after Christianity would be essentially obsolete. Jews would be walking relics. Thus when Rosenzweig gave up his skeptical relativism for the sake of the absolute truth of religion, he could only become a Christian, and not at all because of the contingency that Rosenstock happened to be Christian (and could have been Confucian, say, or a Muslim). Rosenzweig must become a Christian because the absolute truth of religion, which alone overturns skeptical relativism, is found in Christianity and in Christianity alone. The doctrine of the absolute or exclusive historical superiority of Christianity, the penultimate vision of truth in Hegelian philosophy, is the apex of Christian theology.

It was thus as an almost good Hegelian (“almost” because contra-Hegel Rosenzweig was convinced of the superiority of religion to philosophy), and as a completely good Christian, that Rosenzweig intended to convert to Christianity. Rosenzweig’s conversion would be less a conversion, a radical overturning, transformation, metamorphosis, or rebirth of the self, than a realization, actualization, or “explication” of a latent but already operative Christian essence. For both Christian and Hegelian reasons, Rosenzweig decided to convert to Christianity not as a pagan or as a philosopher, but, replicating the Hegelian dialectic and the Christian drama, as a Jew.

Obscured from even Rosenzweig’s brilliant self-consciousness, the ambivalence evident in his justification was not merely between Hegelianism and Christianity, but pivoted on the difference between a vilified Judaism, as it was understood by both Hegelian philosophy and Christian theology, on the one side, and a verified Judaism, as it was (or had been) understood and lived by the Jewish community. This deeper ambivalence—which allows enough space or time for what Emmanuel Levinas calls “the miracle of Jewish destiny, produced at the last hour, at the last instant, in an ‘almost’ as wide as a needle point, but wide enough to allow time for a voice to arrest the arms stretched toward the irreparable”⁵—must always be kept in mind when we attempt to understand Rosenzweig’s insistence that he convert to Christianity as a *Jew*.⁶ As everyone knows, Rosenzweig did not convert. Not only did he remain a Jew, but Jews and Judaism became the center of his life and thought.

Rosenzweig, the Hegelian, meant to replicate in his own person, by means of his conversion, the movement from the alleged anachronistic abstract particularity of Judaism to the historically situated universalism of Christianity—with “nothing holding him back.” But Rosenzweig, the Jew, ended up with much more than he had originally bargained for. What he discovered was that Hegel,

Christianity, Ehrenberg, Rosenstock, and he himself, were all mistaken about the true nature of Judaism, and hence were also mistaken about the true relations that bound Judaism to itself, and Christianity to Judaism. Judaism, he discovered, was not merely particular, abstract, exhausted, nor trapped in a limited partiality criticized and overcome by Christianity and Hegelian philosophy.

Rather Judaism was neither abstract nor concrete, not particular or universal, as it would have to be according to the resources of a Hegelian or Christian appropriation. Instead it offered another path entirely, one whose contours were prior to and otherwise than the various conundrums or dialectical resolutions necessitated by the oppositions invoked by Christian theology and Hegelian philosophy. Judaism offered a path where the apparent disjunction (and hence the always abstract conjunction) of these oppositions was undercut in the ongoing material and spiritual life of a living community—in whose daily, weekly, annual, and life cycles temporality and eternity met and interpenetrated. Fully turning the tables, Rosenzweig discovered that it was upon the unbroken and indissoluble union of body and spirit lived by the Jewish community that Christianity itself, not to mention the redemption of the entire world,⁷ had always been and would always be hitched and guided.

Yom Kippur Services: From Hegel and Christianity to Judaism

The second great event of Rosenzweig's spiritual biography, just three months after the culminating conversation with Rosenstock: the now famous Yom Kippur experience in a small orthodox shul in Berlin, on October 11, 1913. Rosenzweig intended to convert to Christianity as a Jew. He attended Rosh Hashana services on October 2 and 3 in Cassel, his hometown, and afterwards informed his mother of his intention to convert. Glatzer's account of this encounter shows that though Rosenzweig's family was assimilated, like many upper-class German Jewish families of the time, for them, or for Rosenzweig's mother in any event, conversion to Christianity was still going too far:

A day or two later [after Rosh Hashana], after a night spent in discussion with a friend, he came down from his study into the living room and said to his mother: "I want to talk to you." His mother, guessing what was on his mind, said excitedly: "You want to be baptized!" Franz pointed to the *New Testament* in his hand: "Mother, here is everything, here is the truth. There is only one way, Jesus." His mother asked him: "Were you not in the synagogue on the New Year's Day?" Franz answered: "Yes, and I will go to the synagogue on the Day of Atonement, too. I am still a Jew." His mother said: "When I come in I will ask them to turn you away. In our synagogue there is no room for an apostate."⁸

What happened to Rosenzweig in Berlin? As Glatzer points out, in all Rosenzweig's writings and in all the conversations that have been reported, neither Rosenzweig nor his interlocutors relate the details, the unique circumstances, of that Yom Kippur experience in Berlin in 1913. What we do know is that from that day on Rosenzweig never again considered conver-

sion. More importantly, from that day on he fundamentally reoriented his life to center on Judaism. If it is exaggeration and misnomer to say that Rosenzweig converted to Judaism on that Yom Kippur, we can certainly say that he atoned. The transformation and its consequences are so pronounced, in any event, that one would be correct to think of Rosenzweig thenceforth as a *ba'al teshuvah*. He had returned to Judaism; he became a Jew returning from the periphery of Judaism to its center. Unlike the classical *ba'al teshuvah* of Jewish tradition who, brought up in an authentic Judaism, left it behind to later return, Rosenzweig is a modern *ba'al teshuvah*, one who returns to a Judaism that had never been his own. Since Rosenzweig had gone so far both into the non-Jewish periphery and into the Jewish center, into the heights of Western culture and then into the heart of Jewish life, his life remains to this day exemplary for the *ba'al teshuvah* disengaging from modernity. On that Yom Kippur day in Berlin, Rosenzweig discovered that Judaism was neither a relic nor a preparation: it was very much alive.

He had discovered that Judaism was the true cure for the skeptical relativism that he came to see as a spiritual sickness.⁹ As such it was neither a theology, a religion, nor a culture, but rather a comprehensive way of life. What Rosenzweig understood on that Yom Kippur day was that not only did he have a real and living option in Judaism, but that to appropriate this option he would have to educate himself into what he now thankfully recognized as his true inheritance. Glatzer perceptively captures the fundamental life-significance of Rosenzweig's new orientation in a sentence from the later commentaries on Judah Halevi, from a poem Rosenzweig entitles "Return" ("*Umkehr*"): "To have found God is not an ending but a beginning."¹⁰ After that Yom Kippur day, Rosenzweig began the arduous task of becoming not the Jew who would convert to Christianity—the Jew *of* Christianity and Hegelianism, the Christian or Hegelian "Jew"—but rather the Jew of Judaism, a Jewish Jew, a Jew neither in theory nor in practice but fully engaged in Jewish life.

Letter to Meinecke: From Scholarship to Learning

These two events, the conversation with Rosenstock and the experience on Yom Kippur, were decisive in Rosenzweig's intellectual and spiritual development. First was the rejection of the intellectually attractive, but merely free-floating, possibilities of skeptical relativism for the sake of an absolute and concrete grounding in religion. Second was the rejection of the Christian faith, including its Hegelian formulation, as the desired religious solution, for the sake of a comprehensive life and learning of his own Jewish heritage. These two profound transformations determined the path of Rosenzweig's subsequent life and work. But to trace Rosenzweig's route to Halevi, one must turn to a third event. This was Rosenzweig's decision, during the summer of 1920, to turn away from a successful academic career, whose future was assured not only by the scholarly work he had already done

on Hegel (and Schelling), but more immediately and practically by the offer of a university lectureship made by his mentor, Friedrich Meinecke, Professor of History at the University of Berlin.

Like the earlier events, there were two sides to Rosenzweig's third decision. Rosenzweig was obviously rejecting the university career of an academic scholar; however, he began a career as Jewish educator, accepting in August an appointment as director of the *Lehrhaus* in Frankfurt. Jewish adult education now takes central place in Rosenzweig's spiritual and practical development. It is within this context, too, that we must understand his decision to translate and comment upon Halevi's hymns and poems.

Turning from secular relativism to religious nonrelativism, and then turning from Christianity to Judaism, meant turning away from the brilliance of academic scholarship and toward the wisdom and piety of life in the Jewish community. One might suppose that this turn is properly represented by the difference between Rosenzweig's scholarly dissertation *Hegel and the State* (1920), which he was to retrospectively call "dues paid to the German nation," and the "Jewish book" which he recognized as the "work of his life," *The Star of Redemption* (1921). But the difference between these two works, profound though it is, does not cut deeply enough into Rosenzweig's *teshuvah*. The true depth of Rosenzweig's turn separates *Hegel and the State* and *The Star of Redemption* from what Rosenzweig called "life beyond the book," life in the Jewish community. No doubt the *Star* points to this life, but its pointing is at the same time always looking back over its shoulder.

As he noted in a letter to his teacher Professor Meinecke: "The man who wrote *The Star of Redemption* to be published shortly by Kauffmann in Frankfurt—is of a very different caliber from the author of *Hegel and the State*. Yet when all is said and done, the new book is only—a *book*. I don't attach any undue importance to it."¹¹

Rosenzweig's assessment of his progress from his Hegel studies to the *Star*, and more to the point, his expression of *distance* from the *Star*, should not be confused with a false modesty, or controverted by the rightful pride that he expresses elsewhere in having completed so great a task.¹² Rosenzweig was well aware of how much he accomplished in the *Star*, which indeed was a great deal. What Rosenzweig wrote to Meinecke, nonetheless, was that he was no longer especially interested in books that measured themselves by the scientific standards of European higher education, whether directly as in a *Hegel and the State*, or apologetically as in a *Star*. Rather, Rosenzweig wanted now to learn and enter into the prescribed activities and goals of religious communal life, Jewish in his case (Christian for others), which requires an intense learning in sacred texts respected as sacred texts, and not merely as scholarly source materials.

Rosenzweig certainly never turned against books and book learning, which would have been contrary not only to his character but to Judaism as well. Not at all. In the early 1920s, Rosenzweig was a regular member of a daily morning talmud study group, led by Rabbi Nehemiah Nobel, director of the

Lehrhaus, where text study and Hebrew language were central to the curriculum. Rosenzweig did not turn from books but turned instead from *secular* to *sacred* literature, and from a secular to a sacred approach to sacred literature. In this turn from the secular to the sacred one can see the significance of Rosenzweig's new appreciation for Halevi. It was not a turn to Halevi's apologetic work, the *Kuzari*, a book which like Rosenzweig's own *Star* points Jewish readers from Athens to Jerusalem,¹³ but rather an appreciation for Halevi's hymns and poems, which belong to the living "religious" community toward which the *Star* and the *Kuzari* are themselves turned. Halevi the liturgical poet, the "sweet singer of Zion," stands at the Jewish center toward which the Jew at the periphery aims. Here precisely lay his great significance in Rosenzweig's quest for Jewish authenticity.

We must understand, too, that Rosenzweig's work on Halevi was intended to take its place as an integral part of Jewish communal life. The Halevi volume was not meant to be "only a book" in the sense that *Hegel and the State* and *The Star of Redemption* are "only" books, still enthralled, that is, by theorizing, whether for or against. These two books are not on the same plane as a *siddur* (prayer book), for example, where one finds several of Halevi's hymns. Rosenzweig aims to produce a writing and commentary, which could find a place alongside the many works¹⁴ which constitute the life blood of the living tradition of rabbinic Judaism into which he was now entering ever more deeply. The Halevi volume was meant neither as a contribution to disinterested scholarship nor as a bridge from science to religion or religion to science, but rather as an integral part of Jewish learning, at once inquiry and worship, which Rosenzweig then understood to be inseparable from authentic Jewish life.

Rosenzweig's letter to Professor Meinecke was written on August 30, 1920—not long after an earlier unsuccessful conversation with Meinecke in Berlin—and one month after Rosenzweig had accepted his appointment as director of the Lehrhaus in Frankfurt. The decision to leave the university for Jewish adult education no doubt appeared to Meinecke and to Rosenzweig's assimilated family and peers (and doubtlessly also to the younger scholarly incarnation of Rosenzweig himself) as an inexplicable step down, a loss not only of prestige but perhaps even a lapse of good sense and objectivity, not to mention a great risk professionally and pedagogically. Rosenzweig tried to explain (it is the "duty of the disciple toward his master")¹⁵ to Meinecke his new Jewish life in terms of the difference between university education and Jewish learning. The meaning and role of learning in Jewish life is in fact central to Rosenzweig's thoughts on the modern "return" to Judaism, a project he engaged in not only for himself, but in whose service he had clearly found his vocation.

The letter to Meinecke reveals several of the fundamental tensions, which determined Rosenzweig's subsequent life and thought about the relationship between Jews and Judaism, and between Jewishly awakened Jews and the larger non-Jewish (Christian) culture within which Jews live. The key to what Rosenzweig now reveals to Meinecke is the central place of Judaism in

the whole of Rosenzweig's life and thought. Indeed, the expression "central place" is not even adequate to capture its importance. Judaism is the whole place, the very essence and wholeness of Rosenzweig's being and his becoming. "The one thing I wish to make clear," he writes, "is that scholarship no longer holds the center of my attention, and that my life has fallen under the rule of a 'dark drive' which I'm aware that I merely name by calling it 'my Judaism.'" For the sake of his professor, Rosenzweig describes his own personal transformation as the "conversion of the historian into a philosopher."¹⁶ What is really at stake, however, to use the proper names that a residual formality, or perhaps a student's reticence, still withholds from expression, and about which he himself still retains certain ambiguities, is the conversion not of a *historian* into a *philosopher*, but of the historian and philosopher Rosenzweig, who happened in some undetermined sense to be Jewish in his private life ("of the Israelite persuasion," his peers would have said), into the *Jew* Rosenzweig, who happened to be a loyal citizen of Germany.

It is as a Jew, in his new-found appreciation for the all-embracing character of an authentic Judaism, that Rosenzweig turned away from the academy. Because his reorientation was fundamental, Rosenzweig found it difficult, even impossible to *explain* himself to Meinecke. No longer apologetic, his "reasoning" now finds its roots and nourishment in a different climate. Rosenzweig did not give up his academic career for academic reasons, as the result of a feeling of intellectual inadequacy or a failing of creative or critical talent (which he certainly did not have, and which Meinecke did not attribute to him). Instead, Rosenzweig is attempting (and once again failing) to explain his new resolution, even though it lives and breathes, as he is increasingly aware, within a different atmospheric pressure than that of academic explanation. Despite Rosenzweig's efforts, Meinecke could only see his star pupil's discontent as motivated by the more general malaise of postwar disillusionment.¹⁷

That Rosenzweig was discontented with what he takes to be the limitations of scientific objectivity is obvious. But this discontent he shared with most nineteenth and twentieth century academic rebels. With few exceptions, their rebellion found solace not in religion but in various permutations of aesthetic individualism and socialist politics. Rosenzweig, in contrast, turned from scientific study to a wholehearted commitment to the concrete historical exigencies of daily life in the Frankfort Jewish community. In his letter to Meinecke, directly after minimizing the significance of his Hegel book and the *Star*, Rosenzweig writes:

The small—at time exceedingly small—thing called [by Goethe] "demand of the day" which is made upon me in my position [as director of the *Lehrhaus*] at Frankfort, I mean the nerve-wracking, picayune, and at the same time very necessary struggle with people and conditions, have now become the real core of my existence—and I love this form of existence, despite the inevitable annoyance that goes with it. Cognition [*Erkennen*] no longer appears to me as

an end in itself. It has turned into service, a service to human beings (not, I assure you, tendencies).¹⁸

Commitment to Judaism for an educated man such as Rosenzweig, accustomed to the meditative quiet of home study and university library, who now wants nothing more than to become a learned Jew, and to teach other Jews, meant that the core of his existence would be taken up by the apparently bothersome but “necessary struggles with people and conditions,” rather than with the abstractions of an academic cognition removed from direct community service. Whether the immediate and local spark for his new appreciation for real life came as a response to war experiences in the Balkans, or from an encounter with the vibrant hustle and bustle of eastern European Jewry in Warsaw, or from maturation and marriage, or from something else entirely, is not the issue. A deeper undercurrent was drawing Rosenzweig into a more turbulent ocean, making demands that could no longer be met with intellectual abstractions alone. That ocean was Jewish life, flesh and blood interactions within the community, which was his own, a living Jewish life in the Jewish community. Rosenzweig’s attachment to Judaism now and for the rest of his life would mean—would demand—wholehearted engagement, without a hint of condescension, in the everyday life and needs of the Frankfort Jewish community, especially (given Rosenzweig’s training and proclivities) an engagement in Jewish education.

From within the embrace of the exigencies of this time, place, and people, Rosenzweig now understands what would earlier have been understood as heresy from the scholar’s cognitive concern for free-floating possibilities. Taking a Schleirmachean direction, Rosenzweig henceforth denounces “possibility” in the name of Jewish (and Christian) actuality. He writes:

Cognition is autonomous; it refuses to have any *answers* foisted on it from the outside. Yet it suffers without protest having certain *questions* prescribed to it from the outside (and it is here that my heresy regarding the unwritten law of the university originates). Not every question seems to me worth asking. Scientific curiosity and omnivorous aesthetic appetite mean equally little to me today, though I was once under the spell of both, particularly the latter. Now I only inquire when I find myself *inquired of*. Inquired of, that is, by *men* rather than by scholars. There is a man in each scholar, a man who inquires and stands in need of answers. I am anxious to answer the scholar *qua* man but not the representative of a certain discipline, that insatiable, ever inquisitive phantom which like a vampire drains him whom it possesses of his humanity.¹⁹

The “unwritten law of the university” is that any and all questions have equal right to command scholarly attention. Kinship rules of New Guinea aborigines, agricultural habits of pre-Columbian Aztecs, the precise dating of Schelling’s Systematic Program for German Idealism, are of no less importance in an academic context than the fate of twentieth century German Jewry, the laws of *kashrut*, or the story told at the Passover seder. But, and this “but” is

important—*not for Rosenzweig*. For the scholar, yes, but not for the man Rosenzweig, the Jew Rosenzweig. Attentive to the real needs of a real Jewish community, to what, after Goethe, he calls the “demand of the day,” Rosenzweig is no longer tempted by the unlimited openness of the university, no longer tantalized by its forever uncommitted freedom.

Rosenzweig at the same time grasped the limitations of what Meinecke had valued in the potential colleague to whom he offered a university post. Rosenzweig's talents were considerable and his excellent scholarly abilities had been proven very early on. But Rosenzweig had already called these into question in the course of the two earlier events of 1913. In the letter to Meinecke, written seven years after those first awakenings, Rosenzweig is still grateful for his talents, but only when they are put in the service of his true Jewish self, hence of the Jewish community too, and not when they encourage the detachment and ghostlike existence of the scholar. Recalling his earlier experience, he now writes:

In 1913 something happened to me for which *collapse* is the only fitting name. I suddenly found myself on a heap of wreckage, or rather I realized that the road I was then pursuing was flanked by unrealities. Yet this was the very road defined for me by my talent, and my talent only! I began to sense how meaningless such a subjection to the rule of one's talents was and what abject servitude of the self it involved. . . . Amidst the shreds of my talents I began to search for my self, amidst the manifold for the One. It was then (one can speak of such matters in metaphors only) that I descended into the vaults of my being, to a place whither talents could not follow me; that I approached the ancient treasure chest. . . . These, indeed, were my own treasures, my most personal possessions, things inherited not borrowed! By owning them and ruling over them I had gained something entirely new, namely the right to live—and even to have talents; for now it was *I* who had the talents, not they who had me.²⁰

In discovering Judaism Rosenzweig discovers his true self. The rich heritage, the “treasure chest,” of his Jewish self can only be expressed in metaphor for the same reason Rosenzweig's earlier attempt at an “objective” explanation to Meinecke in Berlin failed. And doubtlessly too for the same reason that his letter also fails: without being merely personal, merely subjective, Judaism is too deeply personal. It is no longer about “one” that Rosenzweig is concerned, but about his own self *qua* Jewish self: “The error I made in Berlin arose precisely from the fact that I tried to explain the personal element—decisive in my case—through the objective, while actually the latter was nothing more than the visible confirmation of something I had long since felt to be right. . . . It was a kind of moral cowardice that made me expound myself to you in objective terms.”²¹

In the Meinecke letter, then, we find the fundamental dichotomies that structure all of Rosenzweig's subsequent understanding of Judaism, Jewish education, and the hymns and poems of Judah Halevi: between the objective and the personal; between the objective resources of historiography and an ineffable but rich inheritance; between the autonomy of

cognition, its open questioning and possibilities, and the specific demands of and hence services required by time, place and person; between the abstraction and tentativeness of history and philosophy *and* the immediacy and commitment of Judaism; between the fashions and tendencies of scholarship and the real demands of flesh and blood persons. Rosenzweig will always understand the proper significance of his own Judaism, the purpose of Jewish education, and the worth of Judah Halevi in terms of a living tradition of Jewish communal life, where the past lives in a present that orients a future. Here thinking is not a *thinking about* but an *undergoing*, an engagement in the always *particular exigencies* of the differences which separate human beings from each other and from God, as those differences manifest God's creation, revelation, and redemption.

Escape from Assimilation: Learning from Halevi

Erich Fromm (who taught at the Frankfurt *Lehrhaus* in 1924) distinguishes the empty possibilities of "freedom from" from the rich actuality of "freedom for." In his arduous journey from the abstract but empty freedom of German culture and the university, to the rich treasures of concrete Jewish life, Rosenzweig longed for a trustworthy guide. He longed for the vision of a post-biblical Judaism pure in heart and soul, unlike the corrupted Judaisms he saw around him. He longed to learn a thoroughly Jewish Judaism, a Judaism pledged to the unlimited resources of Jewish tradition. Rosenzweig longed for the vision of a whole Jew. And thus spoke Halevi—to Rosenzweig's thirsty ears. More and more he would heed the purifying call of Halevi, who in "Reply" writes: "And do not be led astray by the wisdom of the Greeks, which never bore fruit, only blossoms"; and in "Wise Teaching": "Wait for His advice and do not trust the academic wisdom of the scholars." In Halevi, Rosenzweig found the teacher for whom he yearned, a teacher whose Judaism could be trusted without qualification, condition, or hesitation. From Halevi, Rosenzweig would learn what his own emancipated upbringing had denied to him, an authentically Jewish Judaism. He would learn, we see from his Halevi commentaries, the Jewish meaning of messiah, sabbath, love of Israel, longing for God, service to God, prayer, holiness, Yom Kippur, Rosh Hashana, Hanukkah, Torah, exodus, and so on. He would learn the far-stretched, four corners of the Jewish world: God, Soul, People, Zion.

What Rosenzweig wanted was to return to a Judaism purified of the corruptions of the very return to Judaism; he wanted a de-Christianized, de-Europeanized, and de-academicized Judaism. Halevi had negotiated these dangerous waters in medieval Spain, keeping his sights unwavering on Zion within a larger world of contending Islam and Christianity. It matters not whether we today judge Rosenzweig's desire and its object to be fact or fiction, living reality or romantic fantasy. Rosenzweig could not and did not find what he wanted in Hegel's dialectic, Meinecke's ideational historiography, Leopold

Zunz's historical science, Hermann Cohen's²² rational reconstruction, or his own *Star*. His holy grail, an intact, whole Judaism, he found in Halevi.

In this same spirit, Rosenzweig was also dissatisfied with the renowned Rabbi Nehemiah A. Nobel of Frankfort. Though they mutually admired one another, and though Rosenzweig recommended Nobel's sermons, and though he participated in Nobel's morning talmud classes, Rosenzweig remained dissatisfied and critical. His dissatisfaction is instructive, however, showing us what he truly longed for and could not find in Nobel. Shortly after Nobel's death on January 22, 1922, we find Rosenzweig writing to his friend, Dr. Joseph Prager: "I respected only the talmudic Jew, not the humanist, only the poet, not the scholar, only the prophet, not the philosopher. I rejected the qualities I did reject because in the form in which he had them, they were deeply un-Jewish."²³

What was wrong with Rabbi Nobel, beyond all the great virtues Rosenzweig appreciated and respected, was precisely his assimilation of non-Jewish ideas, his infatuation, indeed his infection, "with Christian and pagan ideas."²⁴ In a later letter to Buber, Rosenzweig sums up his criticism, writing disparagingly that Nobel "still believed in the university."²⁵

Let us note at this juncture that Rosenzweig harbored no ill will against Christianity. Quite the reverse is true. Just as Jews should be Jews, he thought, Christians *should be* Christians, for the sake of the world's redemption. The problem with the Christian and humanist influence on Rabbi Nobel, then, had nothing to do with a problem with Christianity *per se*. Rather the problem was the impurity, adulteration, corruption, as Rosenzweig saw it, which Nobel's assimilation of Christian and humanist ideas and values produced upon his Judaism.

All my veneration and love never blinded me to his [Nobel's] toying with Christian and pagan ideas. True, it couldn't do me any harm, since I am armored against this kind of temptation as perhaps no Jew in *galut* has been before me. But in the effect he had on others I was always aware of the poison mixed with the medicine. I always tried to steer people away from his mostly horrid lectures to his sermons, where at the decisive moments the Jew in him came to the fore. Only there did he believe himself able to manage without loans from the Christian and pagan cultural spheres, and even *there* one was never sure one wouldn't be handed a quotation from "the master" [Goethe]. Also in the *shiur* he made the most of its weaknesses, i.e., the silly quibbles of philological criticism (the original *mishnah*, first, second, second-and-a-half, etc. strata), while he often seemed to present genuinely Jewish matters almost reluctantly or with the cool, ironic remark, "As they say in the Yeshivas" (what followed was always particularly good).²⁶

These are very telling remarks, especially the last, with its parenthetical praise.

In contrast to the *Star*, Nobel, and even such "orthodox" thinkers as Samson Raphael Hirsch,²⁷ Judah Halevi would represent an assured and untarnished Judaism, resistant to Christianity, humanism, scholarship, philosophy, and so on. Rosenzweig was no longer interested in the "silly quibbles of

philological criticism.” In the epilogue to his Halevi book, he singles out the most eminent philologist of his day, “Professor Wilamowitz of Berlin” for criticism. In a 1924 letter (when he is at work on the Halevi book) to several distinguished *Lehrhaus* faculty, Rosenzweig writes that “it is not at all that historical and sociological explanations are false,” but rather that “in the light of the doing, of the right doing in which we experience the reality of the law, the explanations are of superficial and subsidiary importance.”²⁸ From a detached reflection upon free-floating possibilities, Rosenzweig’s world now had weight and bearing. What Rosenzweig wanted, more than anything else, was to find out—without reluctance, coolness, or irony—what “they say in the Yeshivas.”

Retrospectively, then, we can grasp what Rosenzweig came to see as the limitation of both the *Star* and the *Lehrhaus*. Their virtue is the same: movement from the outside, from a non-Jewish “periphery,” into the core of Judaism. But this virtue is at the same time their vice: they are only vehicles, arrows but not destinations or targets. After being led into Judaism from the outside, the Jew disenchanted with Western enlightenment would no longer tolerate the *taint* of non-Jewish intrusions. What Rosenzweig wrote in a letter to Eugen Rosenstock in 1924 about his pamphlet on education, “The Builders,” is also true of the *Star* and the program of the *Lehrhaus*: “The problem of ‘The Builders’ is . . . the problem of a generation, or possibly of a century: how ‘Christian’ Jews, national Jews, religious Jews, Jews from self-defense, sentimentality, loyalty, in short, ‘hyphenated’ Jews such as the nineteenth century has produced, can once again, without danger to themselves or Judaism, become *Jews*. . . . It is addressed only to the ‘hyphenated’ Jews who want to return.”²⁹

We find Rosenzweig expressing the same thought, the same longing to overcome transitional “hyphenated” Judaisms, even when the hyphen means a *Lehrhaus*-Judaism, in a long letter to his successor at the *Lehrhaus*, Rudolf Hallo. He advises that precisely the *best* students must be encouraged to *leave* the school: “For those who are still Jewish, or once again Jewish, the *Lehrhaus* is only qualifiedly necessary, that is, as introduction and stimulation. There is even a real and typical danger of restricting their Jewish activities and studies to attendance at the *Lehrhaus*, since their work there readily bears fruit. It is one of the tasks of the director to help those who have really gone through the *Lehrhaus* to get out of it again and to stand on their own Jewish legs in doing and learning.”³⁰

The school, like the *Star*, was only a crutch, necessary, to be sure, to escape a crippling assimilation, but only for a time. Its real aim was to get Jews “to stand on their own Jewish legs in doing and learning.”³¹

Inside Jewish life one would still read and discuss, of course, since reading and discussion are integral to Jewish life. But one would dwell on texts as an integral part of Jewish religious tradition, dwell on the talmud and its commentaries, the siddur and hence Halevi, as holy *sefarim*. Torah (written and oral) and life would be inseparable, as they always had been in Jewish tradition. This is the point he makes in a letter of July 12, 1921, to his wife Edith, almost accidentally bringing all these themes to a head. Rosenzweig had been asked

to contribute a scholarly piece to a festschrift honoring Meinecke on his sixtieth birthday. As early as 1921, however, this task had become impossible for Rosenzweig—not because he lacked the “talent,” but because he no longer had the desire. Scholarship, knowledge for its own sake, no longer interested Rosenzweig; it was too thin, arid, without passion.

I'm still laboring over the piece for Meinecke. Or, rather, I realized this morning that it won't work. I'm too far removed from these things. I hope I can find something to substitute, as I should like to contribute to the volume. Perhaps I can find a short unpublished ms. In order to carry out my original plan I would need much time and energy. And I have time and energy at present for those books you are jealous of, the *Sefarim*. The only thing that gives me pleasure these days is to have learned a few folios of Gemara. I have now reached page 6a in *Megillah*; I'm getting more and more into the spirit of it.³²

“[T]here is no getting away from it,” he wrote to Martin Buber five months later about the Halevi work, “one's time is better spent in translating ten lines than writing the longest disquisition ‘about.’”³³ Unfortunately for Rosenzweig, illness slowed his learning, just as limitations in Hebrew language skills made his Halevi translations difficult.³⁴ What is clear, however, beyond what he did or did not accomplish (and he did accomplish a lot) is his motivating desire, his quest for and dedication to an unvarnished, unadulterated, unhyphenated core of Jewish “doing and learning”—a whole Judaism. It is this quest and dedication that separates the scholarly and apologetic efforts of his Hegel book and his *Star* from his Halevi translations and commentaries.

The Nostalgia for Wholeness

Rosenzweig's quest for the unhyphenated Jew must be set within a larger context of Jewish and European nostalgia for wholeness. For European civilization, the onset, pursuit, and conclusion of the horrors, mass deaths, and massive disruptions of the First World War, made a nostalgia for a lost wholeness, a wistful remembrance of things past, a common thread of its spiritual and cultural life. The diminution and tarnishing of an original enthusiasm for the ultimate worth of enlightenment and the value of assimilation were painfully accelerated for Western European Jews by the Dreyfus affair at the turn of the century, and for Eastern European Jews by the pogroms of the 1880s that culminated in the Kishinev pogroms of 1903. In the aftermath of the shock of the First World War, everyone, so it seemed, Jews and non-Jews, sensed the loss of some intangible but invaluable ingredient of European social harmony and community spirit, a loss of optimism now replaced with a hesitation, a malaise before the hitherto enticing vision of progress through science.

Of course, there were precursors. A hundred years earlier the Romantics responded to an incipient mechanization, industrialization, and urbanization by escape into a fantasized medievalism. Wagner revived the Teutonic pagan

gods. Ferdinand Tönnies' influential work, *Community and Society* [*Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft*], published in 1887, idealized the wholeness and integrity of traditional folk community, *Gemeinschaft*, in contrast to the atomistic individualism and rationalism of modern society, *Gesellschaft*. Friedrich Nietzsche's writings, published in the 1870s and 1880s, immensely popular throughout Europe by the end of the century, attacked science along with religion, and bemoaned the belittling fragmentation, the "democratization," which he saw as the very definition of modernity. Against its motley pastiches, Nietzsche called for the grandeur and nobility of "unity of style." This he found in both a distant barbarian past and a distant unforeseeable future "surpassing man."³⁵

Everywhere in Europe, within and without the Jewish world, the culture, sociology, economics, and spirit of the modern world were criticized as products and conduits to fragmentation, disintegration, atomization, alienation. Tönnies' fragmented world, *Gesellschaft*, was the modern world. In contrast stood *Gemeinschaft*, organic community, where individuals—persons, architecture, places, meaning, and so on—found their sense and worth, not in themselves by themselves, but as integral parts of larger organic wholes, participating in an extra-rational transpersonal unity.

It was precisely an organic whole and transpersonal unity beyond rationality that Rosenzweig found in a Judaism connected to and growing out of its own independent tradition. Rosenzweig, like many others of his generation, was no doubt influenced by Martin Buber's *Tales of Rabbi Nachman* (1906) and *The Legend of the Baal-Shem* (1907), which introduced Western European Jews to the fervor and pre-Enlightenment flavor of Eastern European hasidic Judaism. Unlike Buber, however, Rosenzweig understood that continued adherence to Jewish law, *halakha*, was a necessary and key ingredient to the wholistic Judaism he sought.

Rosenzweig's criticisms of the orthodox, liberal, and Zionist Judaisms of his day boil down to a single complaint: they are fragments, parts, pieces of Judaism, and as such, whether they will it or not, they depend for their completion on other fragments, parts, and pieces, whether ripped from Jewish tradition or, as was more likely, taken from the non-Jewish world. They could not produce or sustain the whole Jew that Rosenzweig sought, but only the hyphenated Jew he sought to overcome. In his pamphlet of early 1920, "Towards a Renaissance of Jewish Learning," Rosenzweig wrote:

It is necessary for him [the Jew seeking wholeness] to free himself from those stupid claims that would impose Juda-"ism" on him as a canon of definite, circumscribed "Jewish duties" (vulgar orthodoxy), or "Jewish tasks" (vulgar Zionism), or—God forbid—"Jewish ideas" (vulgar liberalism). If he has prepared himself quite simply to have everything that happens to him, inwardly and outwardly, happen to him in a *Jewish way*—his vocation, his nationality, his marriage, and even, if that has to be, his Juda-"ism"—then he may be certain that with the simple assumption of that infinite "pledge" he will become in reality "wholly Jewish."

And there is indeed no other way to become completely Jewish; the Jewish human being arises in no other way. All recipes, whether Zionist, orthodox, or liberal, produce caricatures of men, that become more ridiculous the more closely the recipes are followed. And a caricature of a man is also a caricature of a Jew; for as a Jew one cannot separate the one from the other. There is one recipe alone that can make a person Jewish and hence—because he is a Jew and destined to a Jewish life—a full human being. . . . Our fathers had a beautiful word for it that says everything: confidence.³⁶

Against the artificial pomp of all “isms,” Rosenzweig would instead reconstitute the lost confidence of Jewish wholeness, Jews with Jewish arms and legs, Jewish eyes and ears, Jewish thoughts and feelings. By confidence he meant the Jew’s trust that to be fully Jewish was at the same time to be fully human. The Zionism of Theodor Herzl’s *Jewish State* (1896) and the several World Zionist Congresses, despite its apparent revival of an ancient Jewish nationalism, was still infatuated and infected with a Western universalism opposed to a truly Jewish humanism. Despite the disillusionment it shared with late modernity, Rosenzweig saw Zionism as still blinded by social and political optimism, still striving for a fantasized future where Jews and Judaism would be subordinated to the higher values of Western civilization. In contrast, Rosenzweig worked to expand the “Jewish adult education movement,” despite its ultimate limitations, naming it the “most important movement among contemporary German Jews.”³⁷ Even if the *Lehrhaus* was itself a manifestation of a hyphenated-Judaism, in contrast to the dominant Herzlian Zionism Rosenzweig rejected, it at least led away from those hyphens and into a genuine Judaism.

If we ask from whence hyphenated-Judaisms arose, Rosenzweig’s answer is clear and hardly original: enlightenment and emancipation. Enlightenment and emancipation lie at the root of the fragmentation of Jewish life, its loss of wholeness, its loss of confidence.

Emancipated Jewry lacks a platform of Jewish life upon which the bookless present can come into its own. Up to the time of emancipation, such a platform was provided by existence within the bounds of old Jewish law and in the Jewish home and synagogal service. Emancipation shattered this platform. True, all three parts exist still, but because they are now only parts, they are no longer what they were when they were joined together—the invisible platform of a real and contemporaneously lived life, which learning and education had but to serve and for which they drew their greatest strength.³⁸

Orthodox, liberal, and Zionist Judaism are inauthentic because they are fragments. Pre-emancipated Jewish life was built, Rosenzweig believed, on the harmony and integrity of Jewish law, home, and synagogue. In the modern world these once integral dimensions of a wholistic Jewish life had become fragments, pieces, that were contending, faltering, and retreating among themselves, vying unsuccessfully with external non-Jewish influences. “Today,” Rosenzweig wrote, “law brings out more conspicuously the difference between

Jew and Jew than between Jew and Gentile.”³⁹ The home, for its part, “is no longer the heart from which the bloodstream of all Jewish life is pumped,” but a place at best in defensive struggle against alternative cultural values.

In contrast to the almost complete fragmentation and partiality caused by the infiltration of non-Jewish values into modern Jewish approaches to law and home, Rosenzweig believed a remnant of wholeness had somehow survived in the synagogue. No doubt he was remembering his own Yom Kippur experience of 1913. He explicitly refers to Yom Kippur when he writes to Eduard Strauss about the residual Jewish vitality found in the synagogue.⁴⁰ But even in the synagogue, fragmentation had taken hold: “The synagogue has become,” Rosenzweig writes, “quite in keeping with the spirit of the culture-obsessed, pigeonholing nineteenth century, a ‘place of religious edification.’”⁴¹ These fragmentations—of law, home, and synagogue—which in various reactive and compensatory permutations produce orthodox, liberal, and Zionist Judaisms, provide further proof for Rosenzweig of the danger represented by non-Jewish ways for a true Judaism. The Judaisms against which Rosenzweig wrestled, in his own person, in the *Star*, and at the *Lehrhaus*, these hyphenated Judaisms were caricatures, the products and manifestations of a larger European enlightenment and Jewish emancipation.

In conclusion, the decisive break in Rosenzweig’s life and thought, between the scholar Rosenzweig and the Jew Rosenzweig, occurs not between *Hegel and the State* and *The Star of Redemption*, as is often imagined; but between, on the one side, a Rosenzweig educated in Western thought and values, as evidenced by his Hegel study and by his efforts to liberate himself apologetically in the *Star*, that is to say, Rosenzweig up to 1920. And on the other side a Rosenzweig embedding himself—learning—within Jewish life and thought, re-educating himself in Jewish thought and values. This occurred first as director of the *Lehrhaus*, and then in the forced confinement of his illness, continuing through six years of taxing spiritual labor and personal growth in translating and commenting upon the poems and hymns of Judah Halevi, his Jewish teacher of a Judaism whole and intact.

I will let Rosenzweig conclude with his own words from a most remarkable letter, written to his mother on June 6th, 1929, just six months before his death on December 10th.

... But now I have to tell you something embarrassing. R. says Cohen decided that in Hebrew translations of his works his surname Yeheskal should be used (with the name Hermann in parentheses). Now I know that I, a Levi, am named Louis. But this is really embarrassing since the whole *am-ha-aretz* [ignoramus] character of my background is expressed in it. Only Levites are called Louis. At my bris probably the same thing happened that I saw happen ten years ago to poor Rudy Gotthelf. The mohel came to that part of the service when the name of the new born son was to be made public; he hurriedly asked while cleaning, “What is his name?” Uncle Richard turned around inquiringly and someone called to him “Ruben.” So uncle Richard, enlightened, repeated “Ruben,”

whereupon the mohel broke out in resounding chanting about the so haphazardly found name of Ruben. But this is not the end of the tragi-comedy. The Hebrew name of Grandpa Louis, after whom I have been named, actually was not Levi, although I thoughtlessly had it put on father's tombstone without checking. As I later saw on Uncle Traugott's tombstone, he was called Jehuda (which also means Louis, like the lion Judah in Jacob's blessing). Correctly I should have been given the name Yehuda ben Shmuel, which is precisely the name of the great man, of whom I am a middling reincarnation returning to his people: Yehudah Halevi.⁴²

NOTES

1. The outline of Rosenzweig's life is easy to trace: 1886, birth in Cassel, Germany; 1886–1905, assimilated upper middle-class upbringing; 1905–1914, university study of medicine, history, philosophy, law; 1914–1918, WWI military service; 1920, publication of doctoral dissertation, *Hegel and the State*; 1921, publication of *The Star of Redemption* (translation by William W. Hallo, Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1985); 1920, marriage, director of Lehrhaus (Jewish adult education) in Frankfurt; 1922, birth of a son; 1922–1929, paralysis and home confinement with amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (Lou Gehrig's disease), Bible translations with Buber; 1924, 1927, two volumes of translations of and commentaries upon ninety-five selected poems by Judah Halevi (Republished by Martinus Nijhoff Publishers [The Hague, 1983]; *Ninety-five Hymns and Poems of Judah Halevi* has now been translated into English by Eva Jospe, Tom Kovach, and Gilya Gerda Schmidt; publication forthcoming. References to these poems use the Nijhoff edition numbering; also see Barbara Ellen Galli, *Franz Rosenzweig and Jehuda Halevi: Translating, Translations, and Translators* [Montreal & Kingston, London, Buffalo: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1995]); 1929, death at the age of forty three.

2. As early as 1917, Rosenzweig published "It Is Time" ("Zeit ists"), written as an open letter to Hermann Cohen, on the topic of Jewish education in Germany; in 1920 he wrote and published another open letter, this time addressed to Eduard Strauss, again on Jewish education in Germany, in English called "Towards a Renaissance of Jewish Learning" ("Bildung und kein Ende"). (In Franz Rosenzweig, *On Jewish Learning*, edited by Nahum N. Glatzer (New York: Schocken Books, 1965). Henceforth J.L.)

3. See, Franz Rosenzweig: *His Life and Thought*, edited by Nahum N. Glatzer (New York: Schocken, 1967), pp. 23–24. Henceforth FR.

4. FR, p. 19.

5. Emmanuel Levinas, "Franz Rosenzweig," translated by Richard A. Cohen, in *Midstream*, November 1983, Volume 39, No. 9, p. 33.

6. See, FR, p. 25.

7. Nachman Krockhmal had the same grandiose vision of Judaism; see *Guide for the Perplexed of the Time* (Lemberg, 1851, posthumously published).

8. FR, p. 25. Glatzer learned the details of this encounter directly from Franz's mother, who also informed Glatzer that she immediately recognized Franz's change of heart after his Yom Kippur experience in Berlin.

9. See Franz Rosenzweig, *Understanding the Sick and the Healthy: A View of World, Man, and God*, translated by Nahum N. Glatzer (ed.) and T. Luckman (New York: Noonday Press, 1954).

10. FR, p. xviii; Jospe and Kovach translation.

11. FR, p. 96.

12. See FR, pp. 103–104.

13. See, Michael S. Berger, "Toward a New Understanding of Judah Halevi's *Kuzari*," in *The Journal of Religion*, April 1992, Vol. 72, No. 2, pp. 210–28.

14. Such as the Bible commentary of Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch (1808–1888), *Der Pentateuch übersetzt und erläutert*, published in Frankfort-am-Main between 1867 and 1878.

15. FR, p. 98.

16. FR, p. 96.

17. See FR, p. 98.

18. FR, pp. 96–97.

19. FR, p. 97.

20. FR, pp. 95–96.

21. FR, pp. 94–95.

22. Rosenzweig met Hermann Cohen in Berlin in 1913.

23. FR, p. 106.

24. Ibid.

25. FR, p. 126.

26. FR, pp. 106–107.

27. See JL, pp. 62, 78.

28. FR, p. 245.

29. FR, p. 135.

30. FR, p. 118.

31. Ibid.

32. FR, pp. 102–103.

33. FR, p. 122.

34. See, FR, p. 134.

35. After the Great War, in Rosenzweig's day, Martin Heidegger in Freiburg strove to renew and deepen Nietzsche's dark past and future, returning to the autochthonous wisdom of pre-Socratic Greece, while calling for a future beyond the technology which had enveloped and diminished the Western spirit. The Frankfort School at the same time argued against a modernity where only instrumental reasoning could make sense, defending an older broader reason still in touch with the ends of man, concerned for higher truth and loving justice. Following this school, but also following Heidegger, Hans Georg Gadamer later argued against instrumental reason, but for the sake of the integrating but extra-logical wisdom of tradition. I thank Michael Platt for suggesting "surpassing man," rather than "super-man" or "over-man," to translate Nietzsche's *Übermensch*.

36. JL, p. 66.

37. JL, p. 67.

38. JL, p. 61.

39. Ibid.

40. JL, p. 62.

41. JL, p. 63.

42. Franz Rosenzweig, *Der Mensch und sein Werk: Gesammelte Schriften*, Vol. 1, *Brief und Tagebücher* 2 Band, 1918–1929 (Haag: Martinus Nijhoff, 1979), pp. 1215–1216. Thanks to Professor Ephraim Meir of Bar Ilan University for pointing out this letter to me, and to Mr. Arjon Cohen of the University of Leiden for help translating it.

Time, Form, and Content: Franz Rosenzweig and the Secret of Biblical Narration

B A R B A R A E. G A L L I

Either Poetry or Prose?

IN JANUARY 1928, FRANZ ROSENZWEIG WROTE AN article for Martin Buber's fiftieth birthday, entitled "The Secret of the Biblical Narrative Form." Its four appearances in print had been confined to German language editions until the welcome collection of writings by Buber and Rosenzweig in English translation, *Scripture and Translation*.¹ At the time of writing (henceforth referred to as the "Secret") Rosenzweig had been working with Buber on the Bible translation for almost three years. Rosenzweig attributes the discovery of the secret of the biblical narrative form to Buber, who, significantly, himself discovered it in the process of translating.

Rosenzweig's title underscores his objection to the view that privileges content over form. He argues that content and form are mutually dependent, and, moreover, that form discloses content. In translating any great work, therefore, to alter the form is to alter the content, and thus inevitably, on some important and sometimes crucial levels, also the meaning. Rosenzweig notes, although he takes exception to Goethe's view, that Goethe "touches . . . on a seminal question in the speaking and hearing of the biblical word."² For translations of poetry Goethe insisted undeviatingly upon content, so that the translated text would reach the widest possible audience.³ "It is striking," Rosenzweig says, "that for Goethe as for anyone who takes the question seriously, the answer seems at first to have to be either one side of a dichotomy or the other. It seems, that is, that since there can be no truce between the claims of religious content and the claims of aesthetic form, the translator must choose between the claims of poetry and the claims of prose."⁴ By contrast with Goethe, Rosenzweig stands in the company of those few translators and translation theorists who contend that poetry not only can be translated as poetry but indeed must be.

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Where Rosenzweig perhaps stands alone is in his polar view of language. He argues that already in germ from the beginning of speech, there is only one language. From a biblical standpoint and as a believer he claims there is only one. In his translation of ninety-two poems by Yehuda Halevi, which renders every detail of form, Rosenzweig claims:

There is only one language. There is no language trait of one language that does not evidence itself, at least in germ, in every other language, be it in dialects, nurseries, peculiarities of trades. Upon this essential oneness of all languages and upon the dependent commandment, namely that of universal human mutual understanding [*Verständigung*], is based the possibility as well as the task of translating, its Can, May, and Shall. One can translate because in every language is contained the possibility of every other language; one may translate if one can realize this possibility through cultivation of such linguistic fallow land; and one should translate so that the day of that harmony [*Eintracht*] of languages, which can grow only in each individual language, not in the empty space 'between' them, may come.⁵

With regard to translating poetic content into a matching or corresponding poetic form, Rosenzweig forcibly writes in the "Secret": "I genuinely believe that the individual structure of every hexameter in the *Odyssey* has a felt and sometimes perceptible relation with the individual words of that line; to translate is in fact to translate this relation, to make it once again felt and sometimes discernible."⁶

And, in the form of a bold challenge written in the afterword, Rosenzweig stresses his contention that form and content must not be dualistically opposed:⁷ "If finally I may express a wish, then it is the double one that the level established here in this small selection will soon be flooded, but that not one of my successors in this territory may have again the daring of laziness to fall behind the measure of exactitude reached here. The excuse that it "is not possible" now no longer is at anyone's disposal."⁸

While Rosenzweig wants the dividing lines between poetry and prose to be strictly reflected in translating, he on the other hand, in actual life, in actual speech—as well as in genuine writing—wants to blur what has been designated as the solid dividing line between poetry and prose. One speaks in both, by turns—no speech is *of a piece* only poetry or prose. Four years before writing the "Secret," he acknowledges that the stretching and transformation of the language into which foreign language poetry is to be translated are gradual accomplishments: "... the problem of translation [of medieval Hebrew poetry] is here first of all quite simply an external problem of form. In the history of translation it is almost typical that the first ones to appear shy away from the poetic form of the original. Homer is translated mainly in blank verse, Alexandrines, octave-rhyme, before one dares to construct modern hexameters."⁹ Furthermore, Rosenzweig observes: "Poetry is after all not divided from prose by an unscalable wall. No expression is entirely without form; pure prose is merely a liminal concept. In actuality, as recent investigations of prose

rhythm have shown, we are all in a position precisely the reverse of Monsieur Jourdain's: we speak verse without knowing it."¹⁰

Rosenzweig is wary of Goethe's feeling that the biblical content is conveyed to the greatest number by virtue of simple prose translations. A crushing heaviness smothers the breathing of its inherent, and original, and intended orality. The speech of faith "does not then sink into the prose of bare 'content'; rather it must—for it cannot do otherwise—avail itself of all means of expression, must sound all tones, must possess all its apparently fixed and prefabricated, independently transmittable 'content' only by grace of the transient moment of oral expression."¹¹ Rosenzweig is interested in a concern central to current discussions: the different uses and places of use of a text. In the actual use of the Luther Bible, he observes, at home, school, house of worship, there is lost "the sharpness of its Either-Or. It splinters into a whole series of particular questions concerning the means by which the Bible can rescue the immediacy of the Word for the mediated and mediable of Scripture."¹² The Bible needs, of course, to be rendered as prose where the original is prose, but, equally importantly, as poetry where poetry: "This is of course seldom possible; but where translation succeeds, what it renders is not only the 'poetic form' transmitted, but also the living word, the winged word, whose flight leaves both the empty form *in se* and the crippled content *in se* far below it."¹³

Telling Stories

Already by 1917 Rosenzweig had clearly differentiated between traditional Western philosophy concerned with essences—what he calls the "is"-philosophy—and a new direction for philosophy that concerns itself with relationality and experience. Rosenzweig calls his method variously the new thinking, experiential philosophy, grammatical thinking, and the "and"-philosophy. "Is" denotes timelessness, timeless truths, while "and" denotes successive events, which take place in time—the coming to know truths in time. The Greek enterprise, which Rosenzweig saw as reaching its successful zenith, and hence its goal and conclusion, with Hegel, asked "What is?", and aimed to reduce every thing to one essence. In Part 1 of the *Star of Redemption*, Rosenzweig asks "What is God?", "What is man?" and "What is the world?" He employs the method of the old thinking, and states that it does not matter which "What is" question is asked when.¹⁴ When questions of relationship between God, man, and world are posed, however, as they are in Part 2, especially in Book 2, questions of experience must be addressed. The epistemological question for knowing truths turns from "What is?" to "What happens?"; and hence philosophy's method becomes narrative, "a method of storytelling." Rosenzweig notes that, "Schelling predicted a storytelling philosophy in the foreword of his brilliant fragment 'The Ages of the World.' The second Part [of the *Star*] attempts to supply it."¹⁵

In philosophical terms and method all three volumes of the *Star* aim to be faithful to these biblical disclosures. Volume 1 sets the scene, introduces the

cast that will be on stage from beginning to end, and whose story now unfolds in the telling. Of the *Star* Rosenzweig writes: "And now this great world-poem is retold in three tenses. Actually told only in the first, the book of the past. In the present the story yields to the immediate exchange of speech, for of those who are present, be they human beings or God, one cannot speak in the third person, they can only be heard and addressed. And in the book of the future there reigns the language of the chorus, for the individual grasps the future only where and when he can say *We*."¹⁶ In Part 2 of the *Star* "the sequence . . . is the actually important thing which should be imparted. It is already itself the New Thinking."¹⁷ The old thinking, for example, asks whether God is transcendent or immanent. The new asks when is God near, when is He distant. "Thus out of the New Thinking's temporality there arises its new method."¹⁸

Four years after the publication of the *Star of Redemption*, and three years before writing the "Secret," Rosenzweig asks: What does it mean to tell a story? "The narrator . . .," Rosenzweig asserts, "wants to show how this and this which is on everyone's lips as concept and name, for example the Thirty Years' War or the Reformation, actually happened. . . . That is to say, time becomes for [the narrator] entirely real. What happens does not happen in time, but rather it, it itself happens."¹⁹ The question posed in the "Secret" is no longer what does it mean to tell a story, but: When does one tell stories? Here Rosenzweig immediately supplies the obvious answer: "In the first place, when something has happened." Besides the requirement of content, however, there must also be a teller and an interested audience. Thus, both teller and listener respectively must have a certain relationship to the story. In the epic, in stories told for entertainment or pleasure, in the anecdote, and in the novel, the relationships differ, and none quite match the relationships of the teller and the listener who are engaged in the biblical narrative.

The Epic

In the epic, the relationship operates in the following way: Someone knows something that has happened. Someone else must learn of this event. In classical and neoclassical drama this instance is occasioned in the messenger telling of the catastrophe. Here, the teller and listener remain in their actual time, that is in their respective present tenses. The listener urgently needs the information imparted in the messenger's story because for him it weaves an integral thread of his own life story, and without this information, his life cannot move forward. The teller needs no artificial means to arouse or to hold the listener's attention.

The Telling of Stories for Pleasure

Stories told for the sheer pleasure or entertainment of both teller and listener, however, require that the teller devise a means to awaken and sustain the suspense for the listener. Rosenzweig claims that it is not—as is commonly said—that the teller must make that which is related present for the listener. The

temporal emphasis is actually *not* on the tense of what is being told, but on the listener's present life. In this case, a device is required to get the listener to listen *as if* what is being told applies to him in the present. Thus, he is to listen as if he were listening to the Greek bearer of tragic news. The teller relates the story as if he were an eyewitness. What is immediately past concerns us closely; what is farther back in the past does not, and the creation of a fiction is needed in storytelling for pleasure.

The Anecdote

The anecdote is the one sort of storytelling in which the event indeed *is* shifted into the listener's present. In the conversation, the anecdote becomes the necessary transit point. In this case, the listener, and *not* the teller, gives the cue for the story to begin and for a point to be made. The teller, picking up the cue from an already engaged listener, makes the point. The anecdote is a story within a story, and in natural conversation, the story emerges out of the conversation itself. The teller does not plan to tell a story, but, in a spontaneous reaction to something said, he is suddenly reminded of the time when . . . , of a story he has heard, and so on. That is, the story was in his memory, not in his consciousness.

The Novel

In literature, notably the novel, the reverse can be devised, that is, first the cue is fictionalized in order that the author might make his point. In this case, he hopes that the reader will take hold of the fictionalized cue; "whether the hearer can turn the point upon his own heart is now a matter of chance."²⁰

The Bible Stories

Neither the contrived stories of the novel nor those which arise naturally in the epic or the anecdote are entirely satisfactory for the form of the biblical storytelling. According to Rosenzweig and Buber, the biblical corpus, in each of its genres, wants to present its contents in such a way that its basic intention to become a divine-human dialogue is conveyed. The biblical narrative has the greatest difficulty of all the genres in conveying the dialogic reality.

The orality, and with it the dialogical intentionality and character of the three biblical genres—the psalmic lyric, the prophetic rhetoric, and the legal casuistic—are much less in danger than the narrative. Unlike narrative they will not be

transformed as works of art to the objects of 'pure pleasure' and . . . lose in that transformation their high seriousness and their connection to the real world. Writing drapes them only lightly; when the Psalms are spoken in prayer, when the laws are followed, when the prophecies are believed, they lose immediately their monologic dumbness and gain a voice to call the eternal interlocutor to dialogue; dialogue between man who listens and God who hears. . . . The

subterranean didacticism of that secret dialogue becomes important only when the public dialogue moving out from the book into the open air can no longer arise of itself—i.e., in narrative.²¹

With the epic, however, “all history must first show explicitly ‘to what end’ we are to study it.” Even then “it is not vulnerable to the critical assessment of its ‘advantage and disadvantage for life’; even the greatest novel chiefly serves an empty need for entertainment.”²² Rosenzweig designates the Bible as the most important book, not because of superlative beauty, truth, wisdom, or profundity. “What is at issue is not a question of personal or spiritual disposition or intellectual orientation, but a question of transpired history.”²³

The biblical stories want to be “divine antithesis to human thesis, divine qualification to human statement.”²⁴ But besides the need for the didactic element of the anecdote, the Bible stories also need to convey messages as they are conveyed in the epic. That is the listener must believe he urgently needs the information if his life is to go on. The problem for the narrator lies then in the directions and sequences of cues and points sparking across the divine-human dialogue. The original narration (and any translation) of a Bible story must be managed in such a way that this central feature is not erased.

If the listener is going to hear the story as personal answer in the natural conversation that the Bible intends to be, he must also be permitted and be able to give the cue himself. How can this ever be achieved? In another essay on Bible translation, Rosenzweig describes one aspect of the human side in the dialogue this way: “As a searchlight detaches from darkness now one section of the landscape and now another, and then leaves these again dimmed, so for such a man the days of his own life illumine the Scriptures . . . nor can one day ever vouch for the next to yield a like experience.”²⁵ In effect, “Biblical narrative seeks to be both revelatory message and commanding instruction. Only in commanding does it offer revelation; only as message does it teach.”²⁶

In what form, precisely, does the biblical narrator convey divine messages?

The biblical narrator must set the cue into the (epic) narrative itself. He has to discover, therefore, a form which gives to the epic the timeless presence of the anecdote, and at the same time gives to the anecdote “the stimulating, suspenseful character of the novel”²⁷ without debasing the stories to the pure entertainment level of the novel. He achieves this through consciously chosen and strategically placed repetitions of words, phrases, and sentences. Through these repetitions, the reader/hearer picks up the successions of cues and points and thus gains access to divine messages and teaching.

Biblical Examples

In the *Book of Numbers* Balaam shouts at his she-ass, when she starts to shy away before the messenger of God, whom Balaam does not see. As he thrashes her, he cries:

If only a sword were in my hand!
For then
I would kill you!

Suddenly, with a sword in his hand, and in defense of the she-ass, the divine messenger becomes visible to Balaam, and says:

She did well to bow down before me!
For then
You I would have killed and let her live. (v.33.)²⁸

With the repetition of the words “For then” a “sublime irony” is achieved through “purely formal means.”²⁹ In the highest sense an effect of the content is accomplished.

A larger bracketing occurs when Isaac explains to Esau that Jacob has usurped Esau’s blessing:

Your brother came with deceit and took away your blessing.
(27:35)³⁰

and then a full two chapters later when Jacob recognizes for the first time that his father-in-law has been taking advantage of him, the point, through a variant of the word “deceit,” is made:

He said to Laban:
What is this that you have done to me!
Was it not for Rachel that I served with you?
Why have you deceived me? (29:25)³¹

This word in its related forms enforces the message that there is a connection between one’s actions and one’s suffering. Sometimes indeed, only the consideration of the word similarities provides the signpost for understanding a narrative passage. In the story of Balaam, “quite enigmatic in itself,”³² the point made is that God’s word is given once, for once and all.

Balak commenced anew to send courtiers, more numerous and honored than those. . . .

But now
remain here, also you, tonight,
That I may know, what HE,
commencing anew, will speak with me. . .

The she-ass saw HIS messenger,
she pressed herself against the wall and pressed

Bilam's foot against the wall,
and he commenced anew to strike her.
But HIS messenger commenced anew to cross over
And stationed himself at a narrow spot
Where there was no way to turn to the right or to the
left. (Num. 22:15, 19)³³

"Commencing anew" denotes doing it twice. Balaam had tried God's first word to see if it also applies to him in the final resort. Rosenzweig observes: "If we are not to be satisfied with God's first clear word, but must try what God, commencing anew, will say to us a second time, then God will this time unerringly speak the words of our own heart's demon."³⁴ The cues and points, then, are repetitions of a word or phrase or a sentence, stretched as on a trestle over the course of a story, or even a series of stories. They may sit closely together or far apart.³⁵

Biblical narrative differs from the epic in its *variations* of like words, phrases, or sentences, which "are never fixed in a single verbal form: they are not the colors of things, but the joints of the story."³⁶ As a result the "formula must sound more portentous, more richly orchestrated at each recurrence."³⁷ The non-biblical epic, in its unvaried, fixed formular repetitions, "like all visual things, should be perceived in a single comprehensive view."³⁸ By contrast, biblical narrative wants to resist imagery that is lifted out of real time sequences. The intention of biblical formular practice is that each cue and point be "perceived in sequence"³⁹ and that a spark flashes across cue and point. There is no other means, except by this secret of the form, which can make visible "the innermost nature of the poem's content, with a power and clarity not to be had by any other means."⁴⁰ For this reason genuine form and true content cannot be separated.

Rosenzweig concludes "The Secret of the Biblical Narrative Form" by noting that biblical narrative offers the one thing still needful: the telling of what has happened. Biblical narrative

... must content itself with the hearers whom the law, the prophecies, the Psalms bring it, from among those they have newly awakened to action, to hope, to love. . . . But then it catches these hearers who are distant from it in the net of the secret dialogue that is extended through it; it transforms distant hearers into collaborators, in a conversation that beneath the shell of its epic past extends itself to them in full anecdotal presence. In word and answer, in speech and counterspeech, in proposition and qualification that conversation offers those who are awakened to action, to hope, to love the one thing they will lack, and offers it to them so unassumingly that action, hope, and love are not dogmatically crippled but spiritually winged: it offers them knowledge; it offers them teaching; it offers them revelation.⁴¹

NOTES

1. The four German language printings: "Kunstwart," 41. *Jahrgang*, Heft 5, February, 1928; "Die Schrift und ihre Verdeutschung," 1936; *Kleinere Schriften*, 1937; *Franz Rosenzweig: Gesammelte Schriften*, III *Zweistromland, Kleinere Schriften zu Glauben und Denken* (Dordrecht: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 1984), pp. 817–29. The English translation is in *Scripture and Translation: Martin Buber and Franz Rosenzweig*, trans. by Lawrence Rosenwald with Everett Fox (Indiana University Press, 1994), pp. 129–42. The quotations are from *Scripture and Translation*; they will be cited as "Secret" with the page numbers.
2. "Secret," p. 130.
3. Hence, Goethe applauds the Wieland-Eschenburg translation of Shakespeare, and the Luther Bible translation, because these translators opted for prose translations of texts that contain both prose and poetry. For an interesting, somewhat different appraisal of Goethe's view, see Douglas Robinson, *The Translator's Turn* (Baltimore & London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991), pp. 76–77. Also it might be noted that with Rosenzweig's reading of Goethe's view, then, according to Robinson, Goethe would exemplify one who is "programmed to dualize everything," and as carrying forward the "Greek (Platonic) idea that is picked up by Paul in his formulation of Christian theology and inherited by Augustine as a kind of cultural given," p. 38. Of course, such a dualistic outlook jars the sensibilities of the "and-philosopher," Franz Rosenzweig.
4. "Secret," p. 130.
5. For the original German, see Franz Rosenzweig, *Jehuda Halevi: Fünfundneunzig Hymnen und Gedichte: Deutsch und Hebräisch* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 1982), pp. 3–4. The English is from Barbara Ellen Galli, *Franz Rosenzweig and Jehuda Halevi: Translating, Translations, and Translators* (Montreal & Kingston, London, Buffalo: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1995), p. 171.
6. "Secret," p. 131.
7. Rosenzweig accomplished the feat of translating ninety-five poems by Jehuda Halevi in German and keeping the original Hebrew rhyme schemes, metrical counts, and acrostics.
8. Rosenzweig, *Jehuda Halevi*, p. 18; Galli, *Franz Rosenzweig and Jehuda Halevi*, p. 184.
9. Rosenzweig, *Jehuda Halevi*, p. 6; Galli, *Franz Rosenzweig and Jehuda Halevi*, p. 173.
10. "Secret," p. 130.
11. Ibid.
12. Ibid.
13. Ibid., p. 131.
14. Rosenzweig, "Das neuen Denken" in *Zweistromland* (pp. 139–61), p. 148.
15. Ibid., p. 148. My translation.
16. Ibid., pp. 150–51. My translation.
17. Ibid., p. 148. My translation.
18. Ibid., p. 151. My translation.
19. Ibid., p. 148. My translation.
20. "Secret," p. 134.
21. Ibid., p. 141.
22. Ibid.
23. Ibid., p. 140.
24. Ibid., p. 134.
25. "Die Schrift und Luther," translated by Francis C. Golffing in Nahum N. Glatzer, *Franz Rosenzweig: His Life and Thought* (New York: Schocken Books, 1953), pp. 257–58. (The original German can be found in *Zweistromland*, pp. 749–772, and the quoted excerpt is from pp. 760–61.)

26. "Secret," p. 134.

27. Ibid.

28. Ibid., p. 136.

29. Ibid.

30. Ibid.

31. Ibid.

32. Ibid., p. 138.

33. Ibid., 139.

34. Ibid.

35. The temptation on the part of "creative" translators, especially into English which abounds in synonyms, can be restated. If the original author uses a word "too often" for the "good taste" of the well-trained English ear for literary style, the translator must be duty-bound to translate the repeated word as the same English word, no matter how many pleasing alternatives he has at his lexical disposal and which might indeed on some aesthetic level "improve" the original.

36. "Secret," pp. 139–40.

37. Ibid., p. 135.

38. Ibid.

39. Ibid.

40. Ibid., p. 140.

41. Ibid., 142.

JAY LADIN

Shabbat Love Poem

for c

It was the week the Tabernacle was finished.
The last skins were sewn together,
the brass mirrors beaten into lavers.
It was spring in the desert. Fresh sun glinted
on fine gold threads.
Rocks rang with iron hammers.
Small, wise lizards with scarlet heads
darted between crumbling clefts.
In the margins of the text, a Rabbi had written,
"And so the wound was healed."
In the kitchen, you are running water.
Making something clean again.
As I turn the page, I hear you singing.
The Tabernacle is completed.
The spirit of God descends.

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A Pilgrimage to Germany

JOSEPH GREENBLUM

IN AUGUST 1994 I VISITED GERMANY FOR THE FIRST time. Like most Jews I had avoided that nation: Germany symbolized the evil of the Shoah, of the horrors launched by the Nazi state over a half-century ago. To travel there would evoke anger and painful memories, and I would not be able to dissociate the events of the period of National Socialism from the places and people, and even the language, that I might encounter. But I, American-born of parents who immigrated from Poland in the early 1920s, had confronted such memories on several "Jewish heritage" tours to Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union in recent years. I had come to realize that sometimes "memory is a form of revenge, a resource Jews have long relied on";¹ that commemoration of Jewish historical tragedy can overcome the attempt to eradicate the Jew and to erase Jewish memory.

To visit Jewish historical sites of tragic significance is a kind of pilgrimage: a return to places that have been transformed into sacred sites that keep alive the remembrance of the Jewish past. "I never wanted to come back to Germany," said one Israeli who had decided to accept an invitation to attend the fiftieth anniversary commemoration of the liberation of Buchenwald. It was the camp where he had been brought after being arrested with other Jews of his village in Poland. "For me it's a sign that in the end, we won. They tried to wipe us out, but they failed."²

I had also seen that contemporary democratic Germany was radically different from the society ruled by the Nazis. I was deeply impressed in recent years by the democratic impulse that animated the mass demonstrations of Germans that brought down the Communist regime and that later protested neo-Nazi attacks on foreigners. In this "other Germany" anti-Semitism had been virtually eliminated from political and public life. Many Germans had come to terms with their nation's past and with themselves, preserving the memory of National Socialist crimes and demonstrating a deep interest in things Jewish.³ "I want to suggest that there are many Germans who cry for what the Nazis did to the Jews," said Dr. Ismar Schorsch, chancellor of the Jewish Theological Seminary of America, just before a pilgrimage to Germany in the summer of 1994 for ceremonies to mark the fiftieth *yahrzeit* of his grandfather at a school he had directed in Esslingen. The school had been

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plundered on *Kristallnacht* and closed permanently by the Nazis, but in 1983 was renamed for his grandfather. Anticipating a trip both painful and restorative, he stated, "It is important for American Jews to recognize that the Germany of 1994 is not the Germany of 1944."⁴ Schorsch sees a "search for atonement," a "spirit of contrition," in many types of local activities and efforts throughout Germany that manifest a strong identification with Jews and Judaism, particularly among young people since the early 1980s.⁵

Schorsch's comments confirmed my earlier decision to make a brief trip to Germany. This decision was reached after much hesitation and after long discussions with my wife: born in Germany, she fled in 1939 with her parents; she did not feel emotionally prepared to return. Since Germany was associated in my mind with the Jewish experience there in this century, I overcame my ambivalence by planning a trip that would focus on places of Jewish historical interest. Calls to several groups specializing in Jewish tours as well as to the Leo Baeck Institute in New York confirmed my suspicion that such tours did not include Germany. Except for those complimentary visits arranged by various towns and cities for former prewar residents, I was told, Jews don't visit Germany.

With the aid of Jewish guidebooks and a competent booklet prepared by the German National Tourist Office, I planned my own tour. I concentrated on the area that appeared to be most significant in German Jewish history: Frankfurt-am-Main and the Rhineland. The origins of German Jewry are on the Rhine—in fourth century settlements.⁶ In the Middle Ages, Ashkenazic Jewry looked primarily to the rabbis of towns along the Rhine for guidance on religious and communal affairs—even today their writings are still read and studied. The Jewish presence in Frankfurt begins in the twelfth century.⁷ For centuries it was recognized as the most Jewish city in Germany and as a center of Jewish learning. Its ghetto is famous today as the origin of the House of Rothschild.

My visit began in Frankfurt with an English-speaking guide who had written about Jewish history and local sites. The office of the Jewish Community of Frankfurt put me in touch with Fraulein Susanne Urban, a young woman who works in the Jewish Museum in that city and who, though not Jewish, proved to my pleasant surprise to be quite knowledgeable about Jewish history, religion, and literature.

The Jewish Museum, which opened in 1988 in a large building once owned by the Rothschild family, traces the history of the Jews of Frankfurt. However, the museum was closed because of preparations for a large exhibition about the Rothschilds. My disappointment was assuaged when my guide led me to the Museum Judengasse. The museum (opened just two years before my visit and not listed in travel guides) is a remarkable archeological restoration of the ground level of five ghetto houses accidentally unearthed in 1987 during the construction of a public works building. The oldest structure, a *mikva*, dates from the origins of the ghetto in the fifteenth century. A walk

through the narrow houses produces a more realistic understanding of the museum's other exhibits on the history and layout of the entire ghetto.

Frankfurt's three Jewish cemeteries yield more historical information. The oldest cemetery, near the ghetto site, spans almost six centuries—from the late thirteenth to the early nineteenth. Heavily damaged during World War II, it was being restored. However, I was able to see the modest tombstone of Mayer Amschel Rothschild, founder of the banking establishment, in the corner of a small, already restored area dominated by large tombstones of several contemporaneous rabbis—testimony to the relative values of wealth and learning in traditional Jewish society. The second cemetery extends from the early nineteenth into the next century and contains the remains of the families of the first few generations emancipated from the ghetto; the grounds are well maintained and there are German inscriptions on many tombstones. The graves of many illustrious figures in banking, science, and other fields can be found here. In the third cemetery, used since 1928, I saw the grave of Franz Rosenzweig whom many consider the foremost Jewish theologian of this century. He chose Frankfurt as the city in which to organize his innovative *Lehrhaus* which assembled a faculty of notable Jewish thinkers. I thought the Hebrew inscription on his gravestone, and indeed the fact that his eternal resting place is a Jewish cemetery, summed up the great irony of his life: preparing a path to Christian conversion had resulted instead in his return to Judaism. The graves of martyrs of the Nazi period can also be found in this cemetery. A particularly poignant tombstone shared by a man and his wife caught my attention: The exclusively German inscription describes the long-time head of the Jewish community whose term ended in 1939, the year of his death; the title preceding his name indicates that he had once held a high government post as a legal counselor. Ironically, it also memorializes their son who died “for the Fatherland” in World War I.

I visited the only Jewish house of worship in the city surviving *Kristallnacht*: the West End Synagogue, a large handsome building typical of early twentieth century temple architecture now rare in Germany. My guide also took me to the sites of two other synagogues that did not survive, both marked by memorial plaques that refer explicitly to their destruction; one of the tablets indicts “Nazi criminals.” On the side of the building that stands at one of these sites there is now a remarkable painting of the large entrance door and of the large circular window above it, with the six-pointed Jewish star that once graced the destroyed synagogue. So real is the painting, the size of the original, that at first sight the door and window appeared to be the actual remains of the synagogue.

Frankfurt's community of 7,000 Jews includes only a small number with roots in the prewar population. The 1986 building that houses the offices of the Jewish Community is believed to be the most impressive postwar Jewish structure in Germany. On one side a single cracked blank tablet of the law rises from the ground to several feet above the roof, symbolizing the fractured

relationship of Germany with the Jewish people. During my visit there was a reminder of more recent threats from outside Germany, a threat felt by Jewish institutions in the wake of the terrorist bombing in Buenos Aires the previous month: vehicles were blocked from passing through the street next to the building, and a police car sat curbside to monitor the site.

My visit to the Rhineland concentrated on Worms, where the founding of its Jewish community in the tenth century is reflected in the age of its two major sites. One is the oldest Jewish cemetery in Europe, with tombstones from the eleventh to the twentieth century. The most famous section, in the older, lower part, is known as the “valley of the rabbis,” containing the graves of several well known rabbis of the town. I was surprised to see pebbles and slips of paper on so many tombstones, particularly on those for the esteemed Meir of Rothenburg—who was unjustly imprisoned by the authorities—and for the merchant who paid the exorbitant ransom demanded for the release of the rabbi’s remains. Often the tombstones are partially sunken, but still fairly well preserved. The cemetery was saved from destruction by the Nazis through the efforts of the Gentile archivist of Worms.

The other site is a remarkably beautiful and faithful restoration of an eleventh century synagogue that had been leveled by the Nazis. Many of its important objects had been saved and hidden in the Worms cathedral by the archivist. An adjoining building once used for various communal activities houses a Jewish museum. Both are named for Rashi, the popular commentator on the Bible and the Talmud, who studied in Worms for several years. Among the interesting objects displayed in the museum were exhibits created by local German schoolchildren. In the early 1940s the museum building and the plaza in front of the destroyed synagogue were used as assembly areas for deportation; now a memorial plaque in the synagogue remembers the approximately 500 local Jewish victims of Nazism. There is no longer a Jewish community in Worms.

How much of the present-day “other Germany” was I able to see during my brief trip to one area? I soon encountered it in the illustrated, multilingual literature for tourists, often in Hebrew, that proved to be comprehensive, detailed, and competently written. I saw it in the care and sensitivity with which Jewish sites are restored and maintained. Much of this is financed by the government, but German citizens are ready to support and even prod the authorities. In the Museum Judengasse I saw an impressive exhibition of life-sized photographs of sit-down demonstrations to persuade wavering officials to develop the ghetto site.

One-half century after the fall of the Nazi empire I saw evidence of a continuing struggle to overcome the legacy of Hitler. Sometimes it is ambiguously or awkwardly expressed. The guide for a separate general tour of Frankfurt that I took, after stating to his largely foreign group that 90 percent of the city had been destroyed or damaged during the War, found it necessary to add that he was not making excuses and to say “Never again, we know what

we did,” but was not able to specify the “what.” A series of picture postcards that I bought showed through aerial photographs in 1937 and 1945 of the Allied destruction of the city’s historic center. Did these cards, I wondered, express an awareness by Germans of the consequences of the wrong turn taken by their nation under the Nazis? Or rather did they tap only a sense of self-pity for the suffering they endured at the hands of the Allies? Some young Germans are harsh in their criticisms of the older generation, condemning what they see as moral hypocrisy: elders, they believe, who supported the Nazis and complained only when the War brought them troubles, who turned away or rationalized when they witnessed the disappearance of Jews from their communities, and who later claimed ignorance when they discovered the enormity of the Nazi crimes.

This criticism seems to be only one example of many expressions I encountered that more explicitly and directly confront the Nazi past, that define the “what” that my city tour guide could not articulate. I frequently came across graffiti directed against neo-Nazis, such as “*Nazis Raus*,” in public places, even near Frankfurt’s historic center. On a wall outside the entrance to the Museum Judengasse I saw a memorial poster listing 1,300 Jewish and other children from Frankfurt who had been murdered by the Nazis, and next to it a smaller replica with the words “Against Forgetting and Suppression” stamped in bold capital letters across it. Both were torn; I was told that they have been frequently defaced since the museum opened and they were first mounted, but each time new copies are soon pasted up. Down the street another poster featured a cropped photograph of the bottom half of a Jewish star scrawled on a wooden fence; the words “Stations for Forgetting” and “*The Börneplatzkonflikt*” were printed across it. The last word refers to the location of the Museum Judengasse and the conflict that raged in the city before the decision to reconstruct the ghetto site. (Börne, a significant figure in the liberal revolution in the early nineteenth century, was born in the ghetto.) Each poster recalls the obligation to remember the Nazi persecution of the Jews; but each, implicitly or explicitly, links Nazi anti-Semitism to the restrictions imposed on the premodern Jews of the ghetto. A short walk away there is further evidence of this symbolic linkage: A Holocaust memorial stands outside the *Paulskirche*, a focus of German democratic hopes since 1848, when the short-lived national parliament adopted a basic statement on human rights in this church.

The efforts of many Germans to recover Jewish history seem to express a striving to redefine their national identity. These efforts appear to complement attempts to recapture general German history through the restoration of significant sites that were destroyed by the Nazis or during World War II, such as the magnificent reconstruction of Frankfurt’s centuries-old historic center. In confronting the Nazi past by perpetuating Jewish memory, these Germans proclaim that Jews and Jewish history in their country have always been integrally linked to their nation and national history, particularly to the struggle for democracy.

The gleaming modern and postmodern skyscrapers of Frankfurt's skyline—the "Mainhattan skyline," my city tour guide quipped—is a striking reflection of the material achievement of democratic Germany in surmounting the devastation of the War. It is the financial capital of the nation and has the largest airport on the continent. But behind this material success, there appears to be an ongoing spiritual struggle among Germans to redefine who they are. I saw evidence that an important element in this redefinition of identity is the revaluation of the role of Jews and Judaism in their national life.

After my visit to Frankfurt and Worms, I had the same sad feelings that I had experienced in Poland in 1989 and a year later in Vilna, Minsk, and Kiev. For I realized that in Germany, too, I had seen some of the remains of a Jewish civilization. This similarity raised the question: Why do Jews visit Eastern Europe in organized Jewish heritage tours but avoid Germany, even though the latter offers many significant Jewish historic sites? Is there not an equal obligation for Jews to memorialize German Jewry? While most American Jews feel a particular identification with their Eastern European ancestors, they may discover another kind of kinship and heritage in pre-Hitler German Jewry. The early and long experience of German Jews in confronting and responding to modern Western culture has significantly influenced the ways in which contemporary Jews of Eastern European origin accommodate and adapt religious traditions. German Jewry of the nineteenth century formulated the fundamentals of American Jews' major religious ideologies: Reform, Conservative, and neo-Orthodox. (Significant events in the early development of these religious movements, especially of the latter, are associated with Frankfurt.) It is at least arguable that the Jewishness of most religiously affiliated and active American Jews of Eastern European origin, shorn of their Yiddish heritage, more resembles that of their counterparts among historic German Jewry than of their preimmigrant ancestors.

The comparison with pilgrimages to Eastern Europe highlights another significant meaning in commemorating German Jewry. A Jewish pilgrimage to Germany, particularly in an organized Jewish heritage tour, would symbolize, perhaps even more markedly, the failure of the Nazis to erase Jewish memory, for it was the Jewish civilization of that nation that was first targeted for extinction. That failure would be powerfully demonstrated by a visit to sites of Jewish significance in the very heartland of what was once the Nazi empire.

Furthermore, such pilgrimages by Jews would recognize and support the "other Germany"—its accomplishments in reclaiming Jewish history and its seriousness in coming to terms with the past and with itself. If such efforts indeed manifest a spirit of atonement, are not Jews today obligated to acknowledge and reciprocate them?

Perhaps such an awareness of the "other Germany," as well as of the necessity of preserving the memory of German Jewry, would help many Jews confront and transcend their pain and rage. Perhaps a Jewish pilgrimage to Germany would prove to be restorative.

NOTES

My thanks to Fred E. Katz for his insightful comments on an early draft of this essay.

1. Ruth Gay, *The Jews of Germany: A Historical Portrait* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), p. 9, citing Martin Bergmann.
2. Stephen Kinzer, "50 Years later, a Visit with Buchenwald's Ghosts," *The New York Times* (April 10, 1995): A3.
3. Lucy S. Dawidowicz, "In Berlin Again," *Commentary* (August, 1986); reprinted in her *What Is the Use of Jewish History*, edited by Neal Kozodoy (New York: Schocken Books, 1992), pp. 38–62.
4. Nadine Brozan, "Chronicle," *The New York Times* (July 1, 1994): B4.
5. Ismar Schorsch, "Today's Germans Atone for the Holocaust," Letter to the Editor, *The New York Times* (July 23, 1994): 18. See also Ismar Schorsch, "To Remember Is Not Enough," *Sh'ma* (November 11, 1994), and his essay "Revisiting My Father's Synagogue," *JUDAISM* 170, Vol. 43: No. 2 (Spring 1994).
6. Gay, pp. 4–5.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 62.

ELAINE STARKMAN

Mezuzah Haiku

god in my palm my
palm in god crumbling
on an ancient door post

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Balfour on Mount Scopus

DAVID LYON HURWITZ

WHEN MY BROTHER AND I WERE CHILDREN IN THE 1920s there hung in our room two portraits of famous men, one with beard, one without. The latter was Abraham Lincoln—the 1919 lithograph by Boardman Robinson, who portrayed him from photographs before the 1860 election. The other was Theodor Herzl, the famous etching by Hermann Struck, and it was signed by both men.¹

In school Henry and I could readily identify Lincoln—we read about him in books, and his profile was on the penny, a coin of value then (one bought a penny postcard, two a newspaper, five a large ice cream cone, ten everything in the 5&10). And did not Father tell us that it was in the home of Victor Brenner, engraver of the Lincoln penny, that he and Mother had first been introduced? Concerning the man with the beard we were vague. In time both portraits vanished. Although they were not Zionists, I recall hearing that my parents had donated the Herzl to a Zionist organization. As for the Lincoln, it was probably sold for a few dollars—the Depression meant that every dollar was desperately needed.

Another historic picture was in Father's study. It showed a gray-haired man in red robes extending an arm while delivering a speech to a vast audience on a hillside. This was the inauguration of the Hebrew University on Mount Scopus in 1925 (when I was three), and the speaker was Arthur Balfour (1848–1930), signer of the Declaration eight years before when he was foreign secretary in the British government. It had fallen to him to play a central formal role in both historic events, inspired by his warm endorsement of the cause. This picture, by the artist Leopold Pilichowski, disappeared too, and in recent years I began wishing I had it still.² Happily, an officer of the Hebrew University made it possible for me to acquire a large photographic reproduction of the original painting, now in the Sherman Administration building on Mount Scopus, so that, handsomely framed and placed in a commanding spot, it enriches my home once again.

The 70th anniversary of the inauguration was marked in Israel with fitting observance, and perhaps the inauguration might be recalled here too. For the Hebrew University—*האוניברסיטה העברית בירושלים*—arose from the

DAVID LYON HURWITZ *retired from a career of research and writing on business subjects and is completing an index to the contents of The Menorah Journal, which was edited for some forty-six years starting in 1915 by his father, the late Henry Hurwitz. His essay, "Churchill and Palestine," appeared in the Winter 1995 issue.*

same Zionist aspirations as led to the rebirth of Israel in its ancient land, and in turn has richly contributed to the amazing fulfillment of what Herzl could only speculate on in his *Altneuland*. Moreover the fortunes of Israel and its university in Jerusalem will surely continue closely linked. In a way the Pilichowski painting symbolizes that idealism, that past, that future.

The solemn exercise of April 1, 1925, marked the first great milestone in realizing a dream born, said Chaim Weizmann, “almost simultaneously with the Zionist movement.”³ Professor Hermann Schapira at Heidelberg visualized a Jerusalem university and proposed it at the first Zionist Congress in Basle, 1897.⁴ Weizmann was stirred by the vision as a young student in Berlin, and nurtured it during his years of study and teaching chemistry in Geneva. In 1901 at the fourth Zionist Congress, in Basle, he promoted the university idea, and in 1902 published a pamphlet *Die Jüdische Hochschule*, coauthored with Martin Buber and Berthold Feivel. The Zionist Congress of 1913 in Vienna decided in principle on founding a Hebrew University in Palestine, and appointed a commission to formulate plans; Weizmann headed it, and among its members was Judah Magnes,⁵ with whom he had earlier formed a friendship. Weizmann spurred the interest and involvement of others—Baron Edmond de Rothschild, Dr. Paul Ehrlich, Buber, Achad Ha-am, and potential faculty members. Meanwhile in 1907 he had seen a property on Mount Scopus on which he “set longing eyes.”⁶ Some years later Isaac Goldberg, a Russian Zionist, put up the funds to buy it from the English lawyer Sir John Grey-Hill and his wife. Thus did the nascent university begin to take shape in purpose and physical plant.

Weizmann came to Palestine in 1918 heading the Zionist Commission, and on July 24 presided over the laying of twelve symbolic foundation stones on Mount Scopus. Not many appreciate the boldness—the *chutzpa*—of that act today. The War was still on, Lord Allenby reminded the Zionist that afternoon.

We were then in a precarious position in every way. Mount Ephraim, Samaria, Carmel, were all in the hands of the enemy, and there was no immediate prospect of a further advance. Dr. Weizmann, however, made light of this. He busied himself in the furtherance of Zionist plans, and within the hearing of gunshot he laid the foundation of the University. . . . Here was a man who believed and his faith helped me in my will to do my job. It was an act of faith in Palestine.⁷

In his remarks at the stone-laying Weizmann expressed that faith. “Here out of the misery and desolation of war, is being created the firm germ of a new life. In this university we have gone beyond restoration: we are creating during the war something which is to serve as a symbol of a better future. In the university the wandering soul of the Jew will reach its haven.”⁸ Later he recalled, “The ceremony did not last longer than an hour. When it was over we sang Hatikvah and God Save the King. But no one seemed anxious to leave, and we stood silent, with bowed heads, round the little row of stones, while the twilight deepened into night.”⁹

In 1921 Weizmann visited the United States with Albert Einstein and a number of prominent Zionists to raise funds for Keren Hayesod—the Palestine Foundation Fund—and generate support for the University. Einstein became a member of the board of governors of the University, and so remained the rest of his life. The next year the Grey-Hill House was rebuilt to house the University's first institutes—microbiology and biochemistry, and Einstein delivered the opening lecture—on his theory of relativity. He spoke his first sentences in Hebrew, then with an apology switched to French. He later donated to the University the manuscripts of his relativity theory.¹⁰

In 1924 Rabbi Magnes founded the Institute of Jewish Studies, which was soon merged into the general structure of the University. A grant from the David Wolffson Foundation made possible the building of a worthy home on Mount Scopus for the National and University Library, then in its early stages of development. Felix and Frieda Schiff Warburg visited Palestine, and were inspired by Magnes' "vision of the University as it would rise from the ridge of Scopus . . . they were convinced that Judaism, studied in that superb scene, could be again a fountain of living waters. They gave him an endowment of half a million dollars for the Institute of Jewish Studies."¹¹ Buoyed by this gift, Magnes toured Europe to interview potential professors and develop further support. "He met Weizmann in London and they arranged to divide the kingdom. Magnes should take the University in his charge, Weizmann the National Home."¹² Nevertheless Weizmann exercised his royal prerogatives in Magnes' domain too.

By the spring of 1925 it seemed to him that "we could look at 'our University' and feel there really was enough of it to justify a formal 'opening ceremony.'"¹³ No students were yet enrolled, but research specialists were at work, and the framework of initial institutes or colleges was set. So invitations were sent for an inaugural exercise at which Earl Balfour would be the honored chief speaker—he had been knighted and elevated to the peerage three years before, and Weizmann was delighted that he had agreed to participate. Jews everywhere were stirred by the coming dedication; in New York a large special issue of *The New Palestine* was devoted to it by the American Zionist Organization.¹⁴

Despite personal reservations, Judah Magnes cooperated in planning for the ceremonial, and looked for an appropriate site, recounts his biographer and friend. "Where to place a great assembly, when the largest room in the University house could accommodate barely two hundred? It must be an open-air dedication. He discovered, on a sheer hillside within the grounds, a natural theatre—with the noblest prospect in Palestine, perhaps in the world, overlooking the Wilderness of Judea, the Jordan Valley, the Mountains of Moab. Young men and women fashioned with their own hands rough seating."¹⁵ What of the platform or stage for speakers and other dignitaries? Weizmann recalls:

The snag was that, to face the audience in this amphitheater, the platform had to be on a bridge over the wadi itself. The gorge was deep, sheer and rocky; the

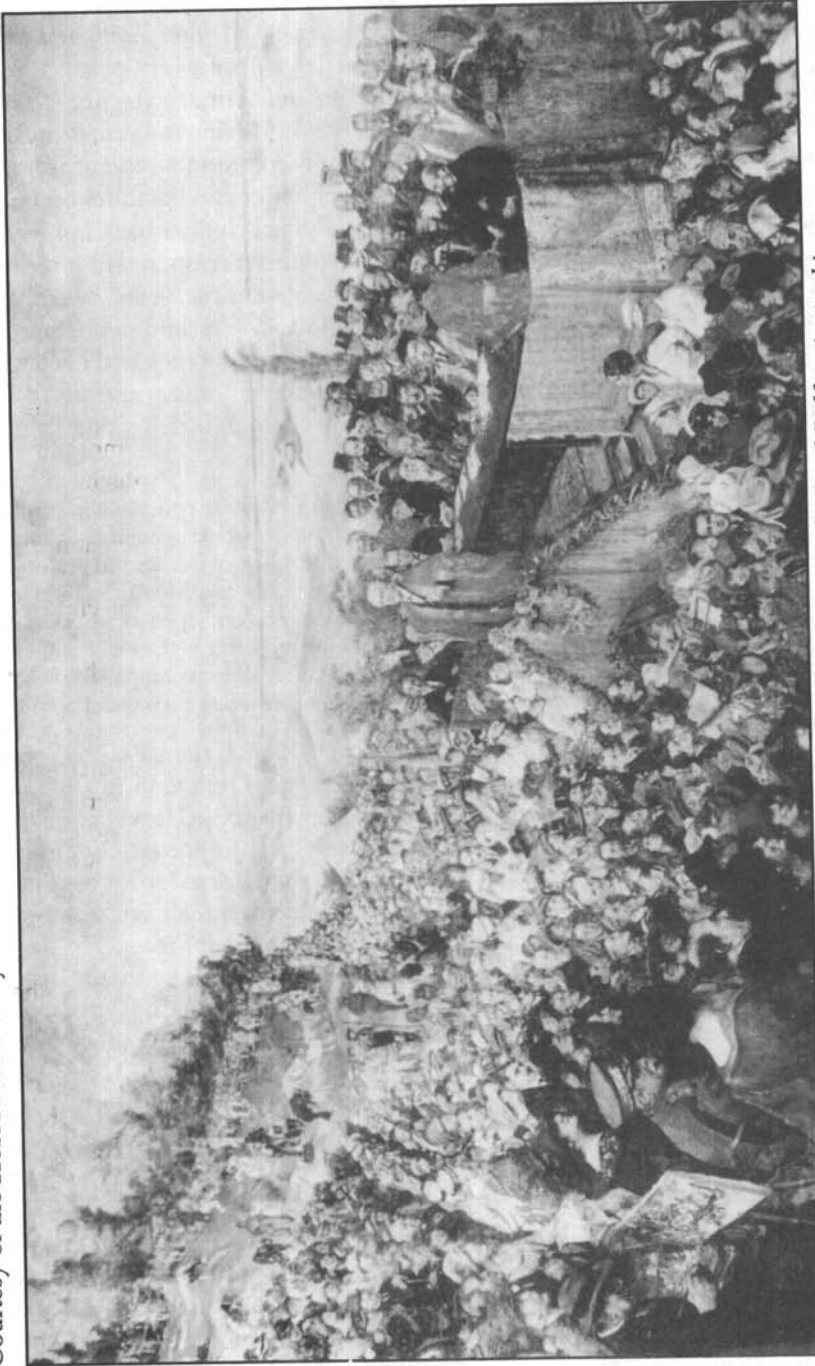
bridge was an improvised wooden affair which inspired—in me at least—little confidence. I was told that it had been repeatedly tested, but my blood ran cold at the thought that something might give way at the crucial moment. The builders were convinced that the platform could safely bear 200 or 250 people. However, 200 of our sturdiest young chalutzim volunteered to dance an energetic hora on the contraption. Nothing happened except a great deal of noise, and I felt a little easier. Minute inspection of the platform failed to reveal any damage. . . .¹⁶

So the stage was set for the historic event Leopold Pilichowski was to capture on canvas.

Half an hour before the scheduled start of exercises on Wednesday, April 1, Weizmann and other speakers donned academic robes in the Grey-Hill House, then proceeded to the platform. Balfour in his robes as chancellor of both Cambridge and Edinburgh Universities, and his party approached from the opposite side, coming from Government House, and a thunderous ovation greeted him. What followed proved to be “a great occasion in the memory of all who took part in it, the most moving and impressive ceremony during the thirty years of the Mandate. . . . The audience, looking outward, seemed to witness the creation of the earth, and to feel that they were part of a new work of creation.”¹⁷ Eighteen-and-a-half centuries earlier, on the Mediterranean shore, there had been an inception of what was destined to become a great academy. The Pharisee and Tanna Yohannan Ben Zakkai sought a favor from Emperor Vespasian, who condescendingly let him establish his little school at Jabneh, and there he assembled fellow rabbanim and students into what became the spiritual center of Judaism and its sustaining pillar after both Temple and state were shattered. Perhaps the young academy on Mount Scopus might prove a worthy successor in a hopeful new era with the National Home at last redeemed on its sacred soil.

The assemblage of dignitaries was unprecedented, brilliant, and to this day unmatched. Many are depicted by Pilichowski in recognizable portrait, and a keyed outline facsimile is available identifying them. To study this painting is to glimpse the sweep of Zionist history, the breadth of Jewish religion, intellect, and culture. Mentioning only those at the front of the stage (along the green-covered table behind Balfour), Judah Magnes is at the extreme left, and next is the German Zionist, Arthur Ruppin.¹⁸ Immediately to Balfour’s left is the poet Nachman Bialik, and then are seen Achad Ha-am,¹⁹ Chief Palestine Sephardi Rabbi Yaakov Meir, Chief Ashkenazi Rabbi Avraham Kook, Field Marshal Viscount Allenby, High Commissioner Sir Herbert Samuel, and Chaim Weizmann. To the right of the constable in costume is Chief Rabbi of the British Empire Joseph Hertz, and on his left are Dr. Israel Lévy—Grand Rabin de France, Nachum Sokolow—chairman of the Zionist Executive who later succeeded Weizmann as president of the WZO, and Menachem Ussishkin—chairman of Keren Kayemet. The list of notables goes on—distinguished Jews and Gentiles both, some on the platform, others seated or standing along with the thousands in the audience, perhaps the largest gathering in the Holy Land since the Second Temple stood.²⁰

Courtesy of the Hebrew University.



*Inauguration of the Hebrew University, Mount Scopus, Jerusalem, April 1, 1925. Lord Balfour is speaking.
Oil painting by Leopold Pilichowski.*

Norman Bentwich viewed the huge concourse from his place just behind Achad Ha-am, and later wrote, "The crowd in the natural open-air theater on the grounds, as far as eye could see, included Jews from every part of the Dispersion, and a few Arabs of Palestine."²¹ In the former category, as it happens, was a granduncle of this writer. Native of Lidvinova—a shtetl near Kovno, 1868 immigrant to these shores, and by now comfortable and prosperous in Louisville, Kentucky, with his wife, many children and grandchildren, he later conveyed the drama in a speech to the Zionist chapter back home.²² Among more official first-hand reports was that of the correspondent for *The Times* of London, who was hardly less enthusiastic, and marveled over the natural acoustics (there were no microphones, loudspeakers, and so on, those days). "Everyone heard every word of the speakers, just as if they had been in a room instead of in the open air on a mountainside."²³ For impressions of a noted Jewish author one can turn to Marvin Lowenthal, then writing from abroad for *The Menorah Journal*:

Above me circled a natural amphitheater ringed with stone benches and black from bowl to rim with the variegated Jewish nation. Below me opened an abyss—ten miles precipitous slide of rock and sand to the ribbon of Jordan and the blue mirror of the Dead Sea, as a stone falls 4000 feet below me. Moab gleamed in cliffs of purple and gold thirty miles away. I have seen open-air theaters—Berkeley with its trees, Point Loma with its ravine tumbling to the sea, Pompeii with Vesuvius and the Bay; but none furnished a back-drop comparable with this mountain-girded chasm. Naturally. Was not this God's own country?²⁴

There was a benediction, then National Anthems, then Psalms rendered by a choir. Rabbi Kook blessed King George, High Commissioner Samuel and Lord Balfour, then prayed for the success of the University. Dr. Weizmann introduced Balfour. He rose, "and with him," reported *The Times*, "the whole assembly—a most remarkable sight. He was cheered so loudly that it was some time before he could speak." The noble Scot had first entered Parliament in 1874 when Benjamin Disraeli was prime minister. He had reached the pinnacle himself and served as prime minister (in fact at the time Herzl had sought from Britain approval for Jewish settlement in Cyprus, or Wadi el Arish in the Sinai, or Uganda); he had held other high office and knew the acclaim of his fellows in the House of Commons and House of Lords. On May 5, 1917, he had addressed Congress in Washington to prolonged applause and cheers, and later in New York's Carnegie Hall at a benefit for the British Red Cross heard the crowd roar its approval. Yet Mount Scopus may have surpassed all this. What it meant to him is hinted by his niece and biographer, Lady Blanche Dugdale:

When Balfour rose to speak it seemed as if the cheering of the multitude would never cease. He was very much moved. And indeed it has seldom fallen to the lot of any statesman to see within his own lifetime the fruits of a policy so rooted in faith in the qualities of an untried nation as Balfour's Zionism had been. The

Hebrew University (barred to no one, whatever his race or religion) seemed about to fulfill all his hopes for a revival and a concentration of Jewish culture. He rejoiced frankly in his own share in the political settlement of Palestine which had made its foundation possible. He knew that when the Jews cheered him there was deep feeling beneath, the feeling of a homeless people, who for the first time in two thousand years were welcoming an honoured guest in their own National Home.²⁵

This emotional response impressed the *Times* reporter, who observed that Balfour “spoke throughout without notes, but had to pause from time to time owing to the applause, and was again enthusiastically cheered when he finished.”²⁶

Today, seventy years later, Balfour’s speech lies forgotten and unread, which is a pity inasmuch as it is an historic document, provocative still, and deeply moving. It comes from the heart of this righteous Gentile who fervently and philosophically befriended the Jews, admired them, and forthrightly declared himself a Zionist. The official transcript of the address is to be found in the rare 1928 volume, accessible in some reference libraries: *The Earl of Balfour, Speeches on Zionism*, edited by Israel Cohen.²⁷ In his foreword Herbert Samuel wrote “It is perhaps in his speech at the inauguration of the Hebrew University at Jerusalem that Lord Balfour’s faith finds the fullest and most powerful expression.”

Noteworthy is the way he identifies himself with the bold endeavor, using “we” instead of “you” when declaring

... we are now engaged in adapting Western methods and a Western form of university to an Asiatic site and to an education which is to be carried on in an Eastern language. That is a new experiment. It has never been tried before under any circumstances parallel at all to those in which I speak to you. Ladies and gentlemen, unless I have . . . profoundly mistaken the genius of the Jewish people, the experiment is predestined to an inevitable success. Not only men of Jewish birth, but others who share the common civilisation of the world, will have reason to congratulate themselves.

Striking too is Balfour’s wonder over the way the ancient, sacred Hebrew tongue had proved capable of adaptation for modern use in science and other studies. “There is a great difference between Isaiah and micro-biology,” he recognizes, and asks: “Is the poetry and imagery of the language of Isaiah fitted to deal with all the laboratory work that is going to render this spot illustrious?” He expresses confidence that indeed “Hebrew has been placed upon lines of development which make it as flexible, as rich, and as capable of adaptation to every new use, to every growth in the realm of knowledge” as any great contemporary language. In fact, commented Sir Herbert later in his foreword, the lexicon of the Holy Scriptures and modern science may be different, but these two great areas of human concern are not incompatible. “They are complementary to one another. Mankind needs both. . . . The discoveries of science are one long psalm to the Divine Greatness. The University at

Jerusalem is sister to the Temple.” And “Whatever the University is, whatever it undertakes to do,” insisted Earl Balfour, “shall be done on the highest level and shall mark out the University of Jerusalem as being on the very loftiest plane of human intellectual endeavour.”

Were he to return today he would of course be impressed by the sheer size and extent of physical plant, and probably—what is more important—by the quality of scholarship, teaching, and research in the many components on four campuses.²⁸ On Mount Scopus itself—*Har haTsofim*—are now gathered the faculties of humanities (perhaps the most important center for Jewish studies anywhere), social sciences and law, together with the Buber Institute for continuing education and the Rothberg School for overseas students, departments of Middle Eastern and Arabic studies,²⁹ and so on. Along with the original Hadassah hospital now rebuilt and providing special medical facilities, and the neighboring Bezalel Academy of Arts and Design, the University’s buildings crown an acropolis of learning, healing, art, and civilized life.

When Balfour spoke in 1925 all this lay in the future. For Mount Scopus was, as he predicted, to flower in years to come and not, like Athens’ Acropolis, shine only from a receding glorious past. Indeed the student, professor, or visitor now discovering the olympian campus at Mount Scopus, not to mention Givat Ram, may need an effort to imagine that day in April 1925 when, as Norman Bentwich observed with British understatement, “It was a very small University.”³⁰ Weizmann was blunter. “In fact, we had not a real university; we had the germ of a university. It was like the Jewish National Home itself: small, but with great potentialities.”³¹ Marvin Lowenthal reported in his vivacious style, “A Swedish newspaper correspondent asks me, ‘Where is the University anyway?’” and later suggested, “The truthfullest thing would have been to tell him: in the will of the Jewish people. . . . The University is still largely an idea, awaiting time and money to clothe it with reality. . . . But this spectacle of chaos slowly reaching form under the pressure of a driving will is typical of the new Palestine. If the problems and answers clustered about the University are grasped, a key is rendered to the whole question of a Jewish homeland. . . .”³²

Certainly hopes were high that happy afternoon seventy years ago, for the University and the Homeland both. After Balfour there were more speeches,³³ including those in Hebrew by Bialik, Rabbi Kook, and Rabbi Hertz. A chorus sang from the 19th Psalm, *HaShamayim m’sap’rim kevod-El*, and Sir Herbert closed the celebration with his parting address as high commissioner, declaring this to be the transcending moment of his five years, and moving the audience to share that exultation when he recited the *Shehecheyanu*. “And as the sun was descending in the west,” he later remembered, “its rays lit up the peaks of Mount Pisgah.”³⁴ In the evening a gala banquet was given by the board of governors of the University, with Nahum Sokolow presiding.

“The Arab will tell you, it is the will of Allah,” wrote Marvin Lowenthal. “For weeks preceding the inauguration of the University, Jerusalem panted for rain. Its cisterns were dry, and the waters of Solomon’s Pools were distributed

in pitifully scant rations. If it had rained on inauguration day, Araby—if it be as hostile to the Jews as its leaders proclaim—would have rejoiced, for there is no greater sign of Allah’s displeasure than rain upon the hopes of men. But if the rain comes a day after, there is no greater sign of divine approval. And the day following the ceremony the windows of heaven opened and deluged Jerusalem and Mount Scopus with life and God’s blessing.”³⁵

Balfour then toured Palestine, always gracious and responsive, with stamina remarkable for a man aged 77 on a strenuous visit. Preserved in the 1928 volume *Speeches on Zionism* are, in addition to his inaugural address, his brief extemporaneous remarks at Benjamina,³⁶ the Haifa Technion, Nahalal, Balfouria,³⁷ Tiberias and Rosh Pinnah. the *Times* correspondent went along, and his dispatches the next few days gave British and other readers, mostly non-Jewish of course, in many cases their first glimpse of the way Jews were restoring long neglected, barren land to fruitfulness and building habitations in town, moshav, and kibbutz. From Tiberias he reported on April 7 (printed in next day’s paper) that at Rosh Pinnah, “Lord Balfour was blessed in the synagogue, where—an unusual occurrence in such a place—an Arab Sheikh delivered an address, saying that he lived in perfect harmony with the Jews. After luncheon . . . before the party left Rosh Pinnah three Algerians informed Lord Balfour that they were living very contentedly side by side with the colonists.”³⁸

Then came the visit to Balfouria:

. . . we looked down upon the Plain of Jezreel spread out before us with a magnificent view of Mount Tabor and towards the further end Balfouria. This time he was received by a cavalcade, of which a large proportion were Arabs [on horseback] from Beisan, the Jordan Valley, even from the Transjordan. . . . Preceded by these cavaliers chanting an Arab song of welcome Lord Balfour entered the main avenue, which is planted with fir trees. Halfway along this he was met by the Rabbi of Jaffa. . . . Standing under an awning symbolizing the Tabernacle of old, and holding the ‘Torah’ or Scroll of the Law, he offered bread and salt in the Oriental manner [sic] and uttered a blessing on King George and the visitor. Lord Balfour appeared to be much affected.³⁹

But a few days later *The Times* published a picture during Balfour’s aborted visit to the French Syrian Mandate, where he had proceeded simply as a tourist, with the intention of seeing Baalbec. The caption read “A CRITICAL MOMENT AT DAMASCUS—The Arab mob breaking through the cordon of gendarmes on the right bank of the Barada in an attempt to reach the Hôtel Victoria. Reinforcements were rushed along the other side of the stream and succeeded in reaching the hotel in time to intercept the crowd.”⁴⁰ The French had mishandled matters, failing to notify British and Palestinian authorities of trouble brewing, and overreacting at the critical point, all to Balfour’s exasperation and disappointment. He had to be escorted quickly to Beirut to board ship for Alexandria.

By contrast, the photographs of the Palestinian visit in *The Times* are peaceful, encouraging, and often stirring. The inauguration ceremonies on

April 1 are preserved in a number of these black-and-white photographs—indeed cameramen and their tripods can be spotted in Pilichowski's painting. That work of art, however, captures the drama, color, and animation of the scene in a way they simply could not.

Moreover the Pilichowski is not only a vivid record—it became a participant in Palestinian history. Fate decreed it was to share in tumultuous events that marked the birth throes and subsequent struggles of the revived Jewish National Home. The saga is one of peril, tragedy, heroism, ultimate redemption.

On November 29, 1947, the U.N. General Assembly voted to partition Palestine west of the Jordan into separate Jewish and Arab states, the latter including Judea and Samaria, with Jerusalem “internationalized.” The Arabs rejected this, as they had rejected all earlier partition plans, and a reign of terror began for Mount Scopus, with its Hebrew University and its Rothschild-Hadassah Hospital, which had opened in 1939. Buses from the city had to negotiate the “Nashashibi bend” in the only access road, with the Sheikh Jarrah quarter above them, and go past the Antonious house of the former grand mufti; “Jewish busses, normally carrying several thousand passengers a day to and from Mount Scopus, had to run a gauntlet of rifle and machine-gun fire, hand grenades and bombs. . . .”⁴¹ The Route 9 bus windows were screened with steel netting; in December regular service had to be suspended, to be replaced by armored vehicles moving in convoys. The University and Hadassah courageously carried on while they could, but the Arabs were determined to neutralize Mount Scopus, and the parting British Administration appeared bent on chaos and anarchy.⁴²

The Pilichowski painting of the April 1, 1925, inauguration was taken from the wall in a University building and placed in safekeeping, then smuggled down in one of the convoys. “Judah Magnes and Ikhud continued to appeal for reason and decency,” wrote Bentwich.

The more hopeless the position, the greater was their insistence on rallying the moral forces. It was as though they believed because it was impossible. . . . Magnes kept a lingering but diminishing faith in the capacity of the British Administration to be of help, till the fatal 13th of April [1948], when a convoy, carrying doctors and nurses to the Hadassah Hospital and professors and workers of the University to Scopus, was ambushed by Arab bands and for hours left a helpless victim of savage onslaughts, while British forces were stationed within a mile, and he and others vainly besought their aid. Among the seventy killed were ten of the University staff and Dr. Yassky,⁴³ Director of Hadassah and a trusted friend and colleague.⁴⁴

The Hadassah hospital was evacuated, University research and classes were moved to makeshift quarters in the city.

In May 1948 came the War of Independence. King Abdullah's Arab Legion, commanded by British general Sir John Bagot Glubb (“Pasha”), demolished and occupied the ancient Jewish quarter in the old city of

Jerusalem, which surrendered May 28; his tanks overran the Jewish settlements of the Etzion Bloc and swept over Judea and Samaria (which thus became his “west bank”); his artillery bombarded the University and hospital buildings. Total demolition was averted only by the demilitarization of Mount Scopus, per agreement signed July 7 by representatives of the UN, Israel, and the Arab Legion. Terms of the U.N. armistice agreement of April 3, 1949, included resumption of normal activities on Mount Scopus. “An Arab-Jewish committee was to work out details. That, however, was not done, as Jordan refused to nominate representatives to the committee, so the enclave remained inaccessible to teachers and students,”⁴⁵ and the University’s buildings, old and new, stood empty, with library, scientific equipment, and classrooms abandoned. The Hebrew University “in exile” built, with the help of its many devoted Friends overseas, a superb new campus on Givat Ram, a long narrow ridge just beyond the Kirya, with the new National and University Library at the center. In 1961 the splendid new Hadassah-University hospital was opened above Ein Kerem.

Then in June 1967 came the Six Day War, and Mount Scopus was freed. The historic Pilichowski painting was brought back, restored, rehung in a place of honor, never again to be hidden and furtively hustled to safety. The abandoned buildings of the University were reclaimed, rebuilt, rededicated, like the Temple in Maccabean times. On the hillside, chosen forty-two years before by Magnes and Weizmann for the Inauguration, one could almost hear again Arthur James Balfour proclaim to the assemblage before him and all the world, “I declare the Hebrew University opened.”

NOTES

1. The Struck etching of Theodor Herzl in profile had been reproduced in *The Menorah Journal* for December 1915, as frontispiece.
2. Leopold Pilichowski, 1867–1933. Painted in Lodz, Paris, London, Palestine. Noted for Jewish portraits and scenes of Jewish religious and general life, in addition to the large panoramic painting on Mount Scopus.
3. Chaim Weizmann, *Trial and Error, the Autobiography* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1949), p. 136.
4. Norman Bentwich, *For Zion's Sake, a Biography of Judah L. Magnes* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1954), p. 147. Bentwich (1883-1971)—member of an English Jewish family eminent in letters, Zionism, and public service—was attorney general in Palestine 1920-31, then for twenty years professor of international relations at the Hebrew University. Among works of his in addition to those cited herein is *Hebrew University of Jerusalem 1918-1960* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1961).
5. Judah L. Magnes, 1877–1948. Born San Francisco, postgraduate studies U. of Berlin, U. of Heidelberg (Ph.D. 1902). Zionist, Reform rabbi. Organized New York “Kehillah,” headed it from 1909. Pacifist during World War. Settled in Palestine 1921. In 1924 established the Institute of Jewish Studies. Became chancellor of the Hebrew University 1925, first president 1935.
6. Weizmann, *Trial and Error*, p. 137. As the northernmost summit of the mountain ridge called Mount of Olives, Mount Scopus dominates Jerusalem from the northeast, and consequently has played a strategic role in the history of the city and the land.

7. Lotta Levensohn, *Vision and Fulfillment, the first Twenty-five Years of the Hebrew University 1925–1950*, introduction by Israel S. Wechsler (president of the American Friends of the Hebrew University) (New York: Greystone Press, 1950), p. 29.

8. *Encyclopedia Judaica* (Jerusalem: Keter Publishing House, 1971), entry by Norman Bentwich on Hebrew University of Jerusalem, in vol. 8: columns 219–26.

9. Weizmann, *Trial and Error*, p. 237.

10. Weizmann and others felt that primary attention should be given first to scientific research and postgraduate studies, a classical pattern in European universities; undergraduate classes could come later (Weizmann, *Trial and Error*, pp. 316–7). An opposing view favored more emphasis from the start on popular education for the Jews of Palestine, a goal espoused by Vladimir Jabotinsky, who called for a popular university to “appeal to the masses of the Jewish people” (Bentwich, *For Zion’s Sake*, p. 149). Magnes leaned toward Jabotinsky’s concept, despite some inconsistency with his idealistic espousal of Jewish and Arab brotherhood in Palestine.

11. Other visitors shown around by Judah Magnes were also struck by the spectacular setting. Rudyard Kipling remarked, “The students should be good men and women in such inspiring surroundings, but would they not be distracted from their work by this wonderful scenery?” (Bentwich, *For Zion’s Sake*, p. 157).

12. Bentwich, *For Zion’s Sake*, p. 153.

13. Weizmann, *Trial and Error*, p. 317.

14. Meyer Weisgal, *So Far, an Autobiography* (New York: Random House, 1971), pp. 71–74.

15. Bentwich, *For Zion’s Sake*, p. 157.

16. Weizmann, *Trial and Error*, p. 319. Today the Minnie Untermeyer Memorial Stage there is solid as a rock.

17. Bentwich, *For Zion’s Sake*, p. 157.

18. Arthur Ruppin (1876–1943): Prussian-born economist, sociologist, and Zionist leader who played a vital role in Palestinian agricultural settlement and economic development. It was he who had negotiated acquisition of the Mount Scopus tract and Grey-Hill House, and he later became professor of sociology of the Jews in the University.

19. Achad Ha-am, pen name of Asher Ginzberg (1856–1927).

20. The facsimile chart identifies many others present, such as Governor of Jerusalem Sir Ronald Storrs, the poets Zalman Shneour and Saul Tchernichowski, the Oxford University Hebraist Herbert Danby (canon of St. George’s cathedral in Jerusalem), and Professor Richard Gottheil of Columbia University, New York. From Warsaw traveled Rabbi and scholar Moses Schorr; from Cracow the city’s Rabbi Osias Thon—also member of the Polish Parliament; from Vienna Chief Rabbi Tzevi Peretz Chajes, chairman of the Zionist General Council 1921–5. From Egypt came the Arab rector of the University of Cairo; from Switzerland Dr. Rappard—rector of the University of Geneva and first director of the Mandates Commission of the League of Nations; from the British Museum Viscount Ullswater, former speaker of the House of Commons; from Cambridge University there came also Sir Arthur Schuster—astronomer and physicist and Secretary of the Royal Society; from the University of Leeds there was British mathematician Selig Brodetsky (who would succeed Magnes as president in 1949). Hebrew University professors Andor Fodor and Otto Warburg were present, as were the architect Prof. Patrick Geddes, Meir Dizengoff, who had laid the cornerstone of Tel Aviv in 1909, and Gershon Agronsky (later Agron)—then director of the WZO press office; he would found the Palestine Post seven years later (it became the Jerusalem Post in 1950), and serve as mayor of Jerusalem from 1955 till his death in 1959. Among artists were Hermann Struck and Boris Schatz, the latter founder in 1906 of both the Bezalel School of Arts and Crafts and the National Museum of Jerusalem. Lady Allenby was present, as were Lady Samuel, Dr. Vera Weizmann, Dr. Celina Sokolow, and Isaac Goldberg, whose philanthropy had made the great day possible.

21. Norman Bentwich, *My Seventy-seven Years* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1961), p. 80.

22. “The scene in connection with this great occasion can hardly be described. Between thirty-five and forty thousand people were scattered all along the mountain, many of them seated in an

amphitheater on tiers of stone. People from every section of the country were there. Those who could not afford to come in automobiles or train walked many miles to be present at this event. . . . Young men and women, many of them with good education, have come to Palestine to build the Homeland. Happiness and contentment are written on their faces. There they are free, and their spirit is rejuvenated," Simon Shapinsky, "Notes on a Trip to Palestine," *The Chronicler*, monthly publication of YMHA of Louisville, Kentucky, Vol. XIII, No. 7 (Sept. 1925): 3ff.

23. "The ceremony was timed to start at 3 P.M., but long before that every available square inch was occupied and even trees were climbed, and the police had difficulty in restraining the public outside the enclosure . . . the enthusiasm of the 10,000 spectators was most inspiring, particularly when one knew that many, being unable to afford the fares, had walked many miles from outlying colonies, taking several days on the way, expressly to attend on this great occasion and see Lord Balfour," *The Times* (April 2, 1925): 14.

24. Marvin Lowenthal, "Inaugurating the Hebrew University," in "Letters from Abroad" column, *The Menorah Journal* (June 1925): 273–78.

25. Blanche E. C. Dugdale, *Arthur James Balfour* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1937), p. 271.

26. *The Times*, April 2, 1925.

27. The Right Hon. The Earl of Balfour, *Speeches on Zionism*, ed. by Israel Cohen (London: J. W. Arrowsmith Ltd., 1928), pp. 74–91. The transcript in *The Times*, April 2, 1925, is abridged.

28. The fledgling university—those two or three little buildings—then had 141 research students. Today it has some 22,000 students, including 6,500 post-graduate candidates, with a faculty of 1,200, and fourteen schools on four large campuses.

29. "From the outset . . . Arabic studies were in the forefront of the programme of the first faculty, which was devoted to the Humanities—or, in their Hebrew name, the Sciences of the Spirit," Norman Bentwich, "The Hebrew University—a Link between East and West," in A. Altmann (ed.), *Between East and West, Essays Dedicated to the Memory of Bela Horowitz* (London: East and West Library, 1958), pp. 70–74.

30. Bentwich, *For Zion's Sake*, p. 157.

31. Weizmann, *Trial and Error*, p. 323.

32. Lowenthal, "Inaugurating the Hebrew University," p. 276.

33. One who did not speak was the chancellor of the University, Dr. Magnes—nor did he wear academic vestment. He was ambivalent toward the event and Balfour's participation in it. His biographer relates, ". . . it offended his intellectual integrity that there should be a world proclamation about the opening of a University which hardly existed, and he expressed his misgivings to Ahad Ha'am" (Bentwich, *For Zion's Sake*, p. 158). Judah Magnes played a vital role in the early development and consequent future course of the new university. The biography by Bentwich is a perceptive account of the man and his times by a friend and kindred spirit, and his idealism regarding the nature of Eretz Israel, although controversial, was respected even by opponents.

34. Balfour, *Speeches on Zionism*, p. 18.

35. Lowenthal, "Inaugurating the Hebrew University."

36. Benyamina, a small colony near Cæsarea, was founded by *sabras*, sons and daughters of pioneers in other settlements. It was named for Baron Edmond de Rothschild (1845–1934), Mæcenas of the early Yishuv, Benyamin being a Hebrew version of Edmond.

37. The moshav Balfouria in the east Jezreel valley was founded in 1922 by settlers from Europe and the US with aid from the American Zionist Commonwealth Corporation.

38. "Lord Balfour in Galilee. Last Stage of Palestine Tour," *The Times* (April 8, 1925): 13.

39. *Ibid*, p. 13.

40. *The Times* (April 20, 1925): 18.

41. Levensohn, *Vision and Fulfillment*, p. 74.

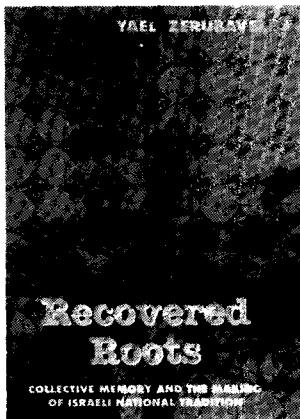
42. Clement Attlee's replacement of Churchill following the July 5, 1945, election may have brought some domestic benefits in Britain, but was catastrophic for the pitiful survivors of the

European horror and for the Yishuv. The callous Ernest Bevin, new foreign secretary, truckled to anti-Jewish elements in the Colonial Office and military, which even Churchill when in office had not always been able to override. Weizmann recalls the sorry chapter—*Trial and Error*, pp. 439–40, 481. The most charitable view of Bevin is in Bentwich's *My Seventy-seven Years*, pp. 218–19.

43. Chaim Yassky (1896–1948) emigrated to Palestine from Odessa in 1921, after medical studies in Europe, specializing in ophthalmology. Dr. Yassky served Hadassah, the University, and the people of Palestine, Jew and Arab; his martyrdom April 13, 1948, along with that of his fellow doctors, University teachers, nurses and students, was Kiddush haShem.

44. Bentwich, *For Zion's Sake*, pp. 270–71. A detailed account of the April 13 atrocity is in Marlin Levin, *Balm in Gilead, the Story of Hadassah* (New York: Schocken Books, 1973), pp. 201–214.

45. *Encyclopedia Judaica* (Jerusalem: Keter Publishing House, 1971), entry by Norman Bentwich on Hebrew University of Jerusalem, in vol. 8: columns 219–26.



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Down and Out in Chelyabinsk: A Memoir

SHIMON WINCELBURG

“Down and Out in Chelyabinsk” is an excerpt from *The Siberian Bachelor/The Further Notebooks of Yakov Marateck, Outlaw*, which continues the picaresque saga recorded in *The Samurai of Vishogrod* (Jewish Publication Society, 1976).

The story so far: Yakov M., a skeptical participant in the botched Russo-Japanese War of 1904/5, returns to his home town of Vishogrod in Czarist-ruled Poland. But before long, driven by his old insatiable spirit of adventure, he evades the matchmakers and moves on to the modern metropolis of Warsaw, where he dabbles in revolution while dodging the gang-wars of the local underworld. Betrayed to the Russian authorities, he is casually sentenced to death and just as casually saved by a passerby, a resourceful young woman of 16 named Bryna Migdal.

His sentence commuted to life in a Siberian labor camp, Yakov takes advantage of the all-pervasive corruption and incompetence to make his escape. His partner in this enterprise is his newly-acquired friend, Pyavka, self-anointed “King of Thieves” and, as it turns out, Warsaw’s most inept master criminal.

Starved, exhausted and hopelessly lost, they stumble presently into Chelyabinsk, a raffish Siberian town straight out of *Dead Souls*.

BUT I WILL NOT LIE TO YOU. SEEN FROM CLOSE UP IN THE milky light of a Siberian summer afternoon, Chelyabinsk is not after all a town of churches alone, nor solely of police posts from which swine-faced men in uniform go forth each day to keep their cells filled with the likes of Pyavka and myself. In the spaces remaining between these twin pillars of Czarist society, there is room also for small factories and shops and rows of prettily-embellished wooden cottages which look as though they were meant to be lived in only during the few mad flickers of midsummer heat.

Among these, after much aimless walking—on my part in the vain hope of finding work; in the case of my criminal friend, on the lookout for something to slip into his pocket—we find an eating place which grandly calls itself the “Cafe Lodz.” We take this as an indication that Jews are not unwelcome as clients.

SHIMON WINCELBURG has published in *The New Yorker*, *Punch*, *Commentary*, *Harper's Bazaar*, *Story*, *The Jerusalem Post*, *Midstream*, and been included in *The Best American Short Stories*. He collaborated with his wife, Anita Marateck Wincelberg, on *The Samurai of Vishogrod*, drawn, like its sequel, from the 28 Yiddish notebooks left behind by her father, the late Yakov Marateck (1883-1950). His play, *Resort 76*, based on Rachmil Bryks' *A Cat in the Ghetto*, had its world premiere at the Royal Dramatic Theater, Stockholm.

Not an actual “cafe,” of course, nor even what you could generously call a restaurant, this small establishment is lodged in a building which rests upon, or rather clings to, the edge of a ravine on one of the city’s outer extremities. Its shell is the windowless ruin of an abandoned warehouse, whose builders, it would seem, forgot to allow for the sudden onrush of melting snow which would, each spring, descend upon it with the force of an avalanche.

Presiding here over what passes for a kitchen is a shrunken woman with a face modeled so nearly in the image of a chicken, you expect her any moment to aim her beak at the ground and peck for grains of corn.

Her husband, in contrast, is a meek, blubbery giant armored in a barrel-like chest, who welcomes us with the uncertain smile of a newly-honest merchant, a position in which he has, as far as I can see, invested not much more than the labor of his resourceful little wife.

The vessels and utensils employed in this establishment all derive, the owners acknowledge with pride, by way of the city dump, souvenir of a bankrupt restaurant which had invested too lavishly in its furnishings.

Even the meat boasted on its “menu” (a slate board covered with incoherent chalk marks) is salvage of a sort, collected by night from the pits into which the city’s butchers toss bones and scraps and other such offal. From these amputations, shreds of actual meat could still be scraped, to be plunged into a perpetually boiling cauldron that is never allowed to cool off long enough to need cleaning.

The table and the seating are equally modest. But to Pyavka and me, of course, after more than six months of prison, exile, and flight, it is a place of sheerest luxury, awakening fond memories of Warsaw itself.

Best of all, they serve quite a decent portion for only five kopeks. And when Pyavka, on our first visit, yelps he has been scalded by the soup because his wooden bowl has a large crack in it, the owner’s wife calms him with the gift of an extra bone.

About to tuck into our meal, Pyavka and I are puzzled to note the other customers do not sit at the common table but hastily carry their food outside, where they must eat standing up or squatting on the ground.

I ask one of them why.

He flicks a black thumbnail at the ceiling, which I notice only now to consist of moldering straw in which spiders and other such livestock have built their nests and webs for what seems like the last hundred years. And since the roof has, for some Siberian reason, been designed to capture every passing gust of wind, a sudden rain of stubble and spiders may at any time erupt upon the table and into the food, presumably offending those of a more delicate appetite.

Duly warned, my partner and I take our bowls and join a group of men eating at the edge of the ravine.

Unlike Pyavka, who never tires of instructing me about life’s unfairness, none of my fellow-diners show much inclination to chat, even with one another. This, I know from my days as a prisoner, means the clientele are, for the most part, traditional criminals, surly, brutish, hard-drinking louts, ragged and unshorn, whose silence is probably no great loss to the world’s accumulated wisdom.

A slightly better grade of conversation may be had with the owner’s wife. (Need I mention that in Siberia you don’t, without good reason, ask a person’s name, even a woman’s?) She reveals to me that, despite her small overhead, she is not only not getting rich, but her steady clientele is robbing her into the

poorhouse. There are, to begin with, those who “forget” to pay her and yet come brazenly back to eat the next day and, when told they still owe money, sometimes turn violent. Then there are those who pay but, the moment her back is turned, will, out of sheer lifelong habit, steal even things for which they can have no earthly use, like scraps of greenish raw meat which she would be ashamed to throw even to a dog.

She has barely finished making this improbable accusation, when I see one of the diners passing through the kitchen coolly slip a bloody piece of uncooked lung into his pocket.

For a moment I forget myself, forget I am no longer a corporal in the Czar’s army and to Pyavka’s horror, raise my voice to the thief and command him, “Put that back at once!”

In the frozen silence that follows, the thief turns to me, not in the least offended, and permits me a good look at the long, pointed knife in his belt.

And before I can withdraw my innocent suggestion, he smiles at me with glinting teeth and says, “I’ll listen to you this time, because you are new here and obviously ignorant. But if I hear you ever again interfering in other people’s business, this knife will go straight into your heart.” He illustrates his promise by jabbing a deep gouge into the table.

Pyavka hastily inserts himself between us and confesses that I am not, alas, a criminal at all but, let no one whisper it, a radical, in fact a revolutionary, and quite without experience in how to conduct myself in normal society.

The man with the knife readily accepts my friend’s explanation and, on leaving, even gives me a friendly wink.

Pyavka, I see, is already transformed. Here, among his fellow outlaws, he clearly feels himself again, as he had been in Warsaw, a man of consequence, a diplomat, an arbitrator. In short, once more a very “King of Thieves.”

Meanwhile, the lacerating September winds serve notice of a Siberian winter drawing close with all the ferocity of an invading army. Racked with sudden overpowering nostalgia for my old life, I ask Pyavka, with his head for numbers, to calculate for me the dates for *Rosh Hashonah*, the two days in which our clouded destiny will be inscribed for the year to come.

In the process, he also calculates for me that, if I insist on our accepting nothing but so-called honest work—assuming we miraculously find such employment—merely to earn the price of two tickets to Warsaw will take us a good year and a half, all the while in danger of arrest, and thus unable even to notify our grieving families that we are alive.

“You have a better solution?” An unnecessary question. Has he not already assailed me with his envy of the practicing criminals, gentile and Jew, who, merrily as locusts, fan out each night throughout the city, stealing with both hands, while my friend and I squander our days walking the streets, smoking cheap cigarettes, spinning preposterous plans and trembling in fear of every thug in uniform?

“I am a man with a profession,” he says. “All I lack is a trustworthy accomplice.” He fixes me with an accusing look.

“There is a shortage of thieves at the ‘Cafe Lodz’?”

“They’re *criminals!*” he shouts in exasperation. “Lowlifes! The scum of the earth! How can I trust them?”

I laugh heartlessly. “Only an honest man makes a good thief?”

"I am trying," he says with teeth-gritting patience, "to induct you into a trade that will never let you down, no matter where fate may cast you."

"I have a trade," I remind him, although without much conviction.

"Organizing runny-nosed bakery apprentices to overthrow the Czar? With that you hope one day to support a wife and family? Two weeks, and you'll be back on your way to Siberia. If not worse. And what if, Heaven forbid, your Revolution succeeds? What will you do then for a living?"

All of which may be true enough. But the fact is I am also the son of Shloime Zalmen Marateck of Vishogrod, who I assume would not do cartwheels at the news that his son Yakov had entered into a career of crime.

This conversation does not of course take place in public but in the privacy of the nearby forest where we have been sleeping. This enables Pyavka to raise his voice and charge, "It is exactly blockheads like you that are keeping the Czar in power!"

"Like *me*?"

"The ordinary Ivan, what does he care about Revolution? It would frighten him to death. All he wants is to be left alone to sleep in his bed and drink his vodka and beat his wife. Tell him he has no 'freedom,' and he will look at you like an ox at a circumcision. Get his wife to run away with you, and he will grumble at having no one to serve him his dinner. But let somebody steal his boots or his cow, and just watch him curse the Czar and his corrupt police. *That's* when he's ready to talk Revolution!"

I must admit Pyavka's regrettable philosophy may not be all that far from the truth. But if thievery is what it takes to bring on the dawn of a Just New Society, then I fear I will never amount to anything more than being a baker's apprentice.

My glum silence persuades Pyavka that I am softened up enough now to hear his plan. To begin with, he has heard that, for the passports and travel documents we need, there is a master-forgery available right here in Chelyabinsk. Of course, being a businessman and not a crazy radical, he expects to be paid for his services. The amount in question is a mere few hundred rubles, a sum which, to me, might as well be a hundred million.

As far as Pyavka is concerned the only real problem is *I*, his so-called friend, chaining his hands with my pig-headed talmudic scruples, deaf to the voice of reason, even in a crisis like this. Especially now that we are lucky enough to find ourselves in a civilized city, an ideal site for him to take up his old profession.

He has, in fact, already earmarked our target.

Having carelessly neglected to put my hands over my ears, I realize what I am listening to is not simply a man in the grip of, as the Talmud has it, "the spirit of folly." This is an artist possessed by his craft.

All I can do in the end is reach into my hidden pocket, take out our common funds, and start to divide them in half, kopek by kopek. In other words, to dissolve our "partnership."

Pyavka is not only shocked, but tears of honest pain rush into his eyes. "After what we have been through together? Would I be here today without you? Would I even be alive today? My dearest friend," he says, "we will either return to Warsaw together, or we will perish together." And, having delivered himself of this oration, he forces all the money back into my hand for safekeeping.

For the moment, my shaky nobility of soul has passed its test.

But more days go by and, paralyzed as we seem to be by my grim notions of right and wrong, our cash reserves have very nearly reached bottom.

Pyavka, quietly confident, bides his time. And when he judges I am demoralized enough, he once again brings up the matter of just one small venture that would, overnight, enable us to travel home in dignity and comfort.

This time, he explains, it is not a matter of my helping him commit an actual "crime," you understand, not even a small misdemeanor like breaking into a home or a business. All he needs from me is something so simple, no man since Noah's Flood could ever possibly have been arrested for it, let alone punished. Absolutely all I need to do is follow my friend around the streets until he has targeted some well-dressed victim, and then, in some polite manner, distract the man while my accomplice picks his pockets as neatly as a surgeon removing an appendix.

I look at my good friend and sigh. What he has failed to consider of course is that, while he performs his little operation, I would have to look the victim in the eye. A practice which, as we know, inevitably leads a man, in time, to acquire what the Commentaries call an *azus ponim*, a "brazenness of face."

Let down once more, yet unwilling either to give up on me or let me condemn him to an existence of utter idleness, Pyavka inquires next how I would feel about stealing from other criminals. This, after all, could on no scale of morality, human or divine, be called anything but a meting out of deserved justice.

I draw gently to his attention that this would also be somewhat more likely to get us knifed or shot.

Barely a day or two later, Pyavka comes up with a fresh proposal. His target this time is a factory not far from here, a place which turns out agricultural tools. Tomorrow is the day it will pay its workers their miserable weekly pittance. Which means that tonight, and tonight only, their strong-box will be stuffed with cash. On a scouting expedition the previous week, Pyavka already determined that the management has such blind confidence in the Germanic precision and hardness of its safe, it does not feel it necessary also to lavish the few extra kopeks it would take to hire a night watchman.

"So you see," he pre-empts whatever far-fetched objections I might contrive this time, "you will simply, as you did in Warsaw often enough, be punishing a Capitalist Exploiter."

My accursed friend has begun to make it sound almost tempting. But, having had my share of run-ins with other citizens of Warsaw's underworld, including a couple of Wild-West-type shoot-outs, I also know that every word spoken by a professional criminal must be not only closely examined, but weighed and measured and filtered a hundred times over before you swallow it.

On the other hand, I am by now, like a certain type of young woman, already half won over and in need only of a small additional push. In consequence, I fatally forget also to ask one obvious question.

Pyavka awakens me at midnight, annoyed to find I am so "unconcerned," I have fallen soundly asleep.

Under a moonless sky, we fumble our way out of our wooded dormitory. As luck has it, all of the city's fierce guardians of law and order, the devil take them, appear this night to be smothered in sleep. We reach the factory without being accosted by so much as a cat.

The tall iron gate, of course, is no serious obstacle. The way Pyavka, however, goes to work on its padlock, I can wonder only why the noise does not wake up every householder on the street.

"We'll go over the top," he finally rules, as though this had been part of his strategy all along.

I am about to sling one leg over the spiked gate, when a couple of bellowing watch-dogs explode under my feet. And this, of course, was the question I'd forgotten to ask. The dogs flash their avid fangs and fiery tongues at us and hurl themselves against the bars of the gate as though hoping to tear off at least one of our legs. Before I know it, I am back outside and running like the wind, with Pyavka panting and trampling at my back.

Back in the forest, I roll on the ground, laughing with hysterical relief. Pyavka is furious to see me take the matter so lightly. "With anyone *competent*," he says, "I would at this moment be sitting in front of an open safe, stuffing my pockets. Do you realize what you cost me tonight?"

"The question, good brother, is," I say, "how would you have gotten away on one leg?"

At which, Pyavka, not being entirely without humor, allows himself to cough up a lump of dry laughter.

Moments later, he admits to a terrible fear. What if he has indeed lost his masterful touch? Having no other trade to fall back on, how will he, back in Warsaw, support himself and his long-suffering wife?

He has, I admit, good grounds for his anxiety. As September runs its stormy course, and we awaken mornings on a bed of frost as sharp as splintered glass, my friend abruptly announces he will no longer sleep in the forest. Not when, if not for me and my "womanly" scruples, he might already be home with his wife. Oh yes, it is all well and good for a feather-headed idealist like me to turn up my nose at such a bourgeois trade as common theft. But what alternative do I propose?

I agree that the nights are cooling off, and we, that is to say Pyavka, may not much longer be able to sleep under the stars. It is now less than a week from *Rosh Hashonoh*, when Jews in more civilized places assemble and pray for a good year. And here I am in exile within our Exile, a castaway among castaways, and, of all people, it took a monarch of thieves to reawaken my Jewish conscience!

I say, "What can we do?"

"Nothing," Pyavka says bitterly. "Nothing at all. If you refuse to help me earn even some pocket money, what *can* we do but live here in the woods until we freeze to death? But, of course, *you* at least will die an honest man," he adds cuttingly.

"If one has no choice," I try to console him, "it's really quite possible to sleep in the snow. I've done it many times. You simply dig a little tunnel for yourself and heat it with your own body."

Never having been a soldier, Pyavka looks at me as though I had gone mad. "You will never amount to anything," he pronounces with finality. What's more, I can see him take it as a personal affront that I sleep so soundly, while *his* head is bursting with worry for both our bodily and spiritual health.

Infected by my comrade's desperation and eager to encourage this unexpected turn toward repentance, I question the distinguished owner of the "Cafe Lodz," not ordinarily the most reliable of witnesses, whether there might not be

such a thing as a synagogue in this wretched city of his. He gives the matter several seconds of his deepest thought, then refers me to his chicken-wife who, he confesses, is the “scholar” in the family.

She, busy stripping shreds of meat from a bone of dinosaur dimensions, can only shrug. “I have a prayer book, if you want it,” she allows, “although it doesn’t have all the pages. I think he,” she sings her husband with a scornful look, “used some of them to roll cigarettes. As for a synagogue,” she chokes with laughter at the thought, “you can make one right here. My customers will be your congregation.”

The husband also laughs and, frankly, I laugh with him.

I have, by this time, lived and worked and fought and prayed with almost every manner of Jew, from exotic Georgians, fierce as wild Indians, to glum Russian-style *marranos*. But expecting to make up a congregation out of the dregs, Jewish and otherwise, who constitute the clientele of the “Cafe Lodz,” seems to me simply a bad joke.

Pyavka, on the other hand, is charmed by the idea. I discover, to my dismay, that he also fancies himself a talented cantor and, even in these unlikely surroundings, cannot wait to demonstrate his skills.

Since we need, of course, a quorum of at least ten male adult Jews, Pyavka canvasses some of our fellow-diners, asking whether they would care to join us in two days of prayer for, don’t laugh, a good year.

In response, they don’t exactly roll on the floor, but some of their responses bear out my father’s observation that, since the Creator has such extra-high expectations of His people, when a Jew stumbles, he has infinitely farther to fall.

Pyavka, though, is not at all discouraged. To him, he assures me, the criminal mind is an open book. With great dignity, he simply lets everyone know what time the service will start tomorrow, with or without them.

In the morning, at precisely the appointed hour, Pyavka and I are the only congregants. (This being a sacred occasion, I refrain from asking him where he had suddenly acquired a gold watch.) Even the cafe owner and his wife are nowhere in sight. But they have left for us a tattered prayer book and a large gray *tallis* somewhat diminished by mothholes and not very skillfully patched.

Pyavka mantles himself and, before my eyes, undergoes an astounding transformation. His copper beard which, left too long untended, had lent him the aspect of a low-grade charlatan, suddenly frames a profile radiant with otherworldliness. Surely, I decide, the Gates of Repentance are open wide even to those that dwell on the harsh plains of Siberia. And, this being the season of forgiveness, I am prepared to accept that no Jewish soul is ever totally lost, and no doubt it was only his laudable desire to make a comfortable life for his wife and son that had diverted him onto the hard path of criminality.

By mid-morning, the congregation has grown to six tentative men and the cafe-owner’s wife who, with traditional modesty, has put up a ragged curtain to delineate the women’s section. Gradually, more men amble in, one by one, hands in pockets, intending perhaps to scoff or, at best, to stay only a moment or two. But something in Pyavka’s voice seems to penetrate their souls, and most of them, Jew and gentile, stay on, mute, respectful and only mildly bored.

Intending to save the full power of his voice for the *Mussaf* Service, Pyavka pauses and invites the cafe-owner to take his place for a while. Our host obediently steps forward, slings the *tallis* over his shoulders like a rifle, picks up the prayer

book, opens his mouth, takes a deep breath and falls dead silent. He has remembered he cannot read Hebrew. Nonetheless, he tries bravely to chant what sound like prayers to him until some of his more knowledgeable customers stand up and tactfully drag him away from our makeshift pulpit.

I look around me and, almost while my back was turned, our congregation has grown to nearly fifty men, including some I have never seen here before.

Not one of our new congregants, unfortunately, knows a single word of the prayers.

Pyavka, in desperation, snatches the abandoned *tallis* and puts it on me.

For a moment I feel overwhelmed. Never in my life have I led a congregation. But, with just a little prompting from my partner, it all comes rushing back, even the melodies which once had stirred my heart and even now prove capable of extracting tears at least from my own eyes. And so, with an unexpected burst of sorrowful conviction, I thank the Almighty who had (thus far) kept my foot from stumbling, mindful that I am, willy-nilly, also pouring out my pleas on behalf of assorted footpads, housebreakers, and pickpockets.

In the process, I can only wonder, what if my petitions indeed reach the Throne of the Most High, and I succeed in wheedling a good year for my clients? A "good year," to them, after all, means merely a year of good opportunities for the commission of whatever felonies sent them to Siberia in the first place.

Be that as it may, I feel helplessly wrenched by emotions kept half-buried since childhood. And while I fail to raise any responding echoes other than Pyavka's, whose tone sounds to me almost a little jealous, the congregation's very silence makes me feel a curious kind of solidarity with even these tainted souls.

What's more, I begin to imagine that my words not only pierce the Gates of Heaven but, here and there, even enter the hearts of murderers and thieves, gentile and Jew.

At the same time, naturally, I take good care not to let any of my fellow worshippers stand close enough to pick my pockets.

Afterwards we all sit down in excellent spirits and pound on the tables, clamoring for our mid-day meal. We cheer, as the owner's wife emerges from the kitchen, carrying a large, steaming wooden platter almost as heavy as herself.

We fall briskly upon our portions, but only for the first mouthful. Our noses warn us belatedly that, for once, whatever dark magic she usually worked in the kitchen, no amount of spicing could have disguised the fact that this particular piece of animal flesh was not merely spoiled but had already begun to putrefy. Possibly our hostess had saved it for this day on the flattering assumption that our minds would be distracted by more spiritual concerns.

Alerted by our mutterings, she pops out of the kitchen, her face and apron blackened with wood smoke, and demands, "Why aren't you eating?"

No one says a word. The silence grows embarrassing. I look to my friend Pyavka to exercise a bit of diplomacy. He avoids my eye.

I finally open my mouth and suggest to our hostess, "I think we're a little late for this meal."

"Late? What do you mean late? I just served it."

I explain that, for this particular piece of meat, we are in fact, quite a bit late. Seeing her look of dismay, I concede that, had we come about three months earlier, it would no doubt have been delicious.

With a look of utter scorn, she pads back into the kitchen, spills a torrent of abuse upon her bewildered husband, and does not show her face again until evening.

We, meanwhile, look at one another in resignation and proceed to make a holiday meal out of grey, glutinous chunks of bread and a basket of shriveled Siberian apples.

Purely from the standpoint of attendance, things go about equally well the Second Day. That is, more than half our congregation actually comes back.

That night, as Pyavka and I return to the "Cafe Lodz" for our dinner, we are startled to witness a barefaced act of armed robbery. Two of our fiercer-looking cutthroats are going from man to man and, at knife-point, extract money from each.

Resigned, I too reach into my pocket. Should I really be surprised that neither Pyavka's prayers nor mine have softened as many hearts as I had thought?

But no knife-blade threatens either me or my friend. Has our new status as religious functionaries, I wonder, earned us some sort of immunity? And if so, for how long?

At the end of our nervously silent meal, the two cutthroats approach our table, their faces split in broken smiles, and dump their loot in front of us.

"What's this?"

"For your work these last two days. Divide it between you. Divide it *honestly!*" they threaten.

It is the first legitimate money I have earned in over six months! Flushed with enthusiasm for my newly-discovered aptitude, I leap up on the bench and assure my fellow diners and idlers that, never in my life, have I prayed in an atmosphere of such broken-hearted remorse. And, swept along by my own eloquence, I further wish them all a year of good fortune and a short exile and a speedy reunion with their loved ones back in Europe, and assure them that, come the Revolution, there will be a new social order governed by universal justice, with enough work and enough food for one and all, so that no man would ever again be driven to steal or lift a hand in anger against his neighbor.

This last observation, I note, does not go over too well, and Pyavka obliges me to sit back down before our newfound admirers have second thoughts and decide that, on balance, they might have been a bit too generous.

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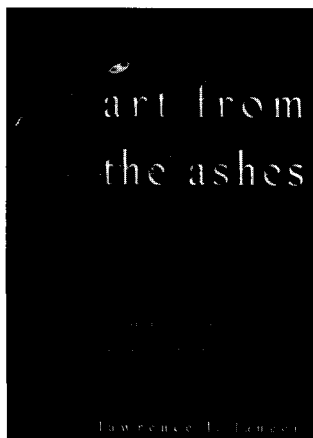
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JUDAISM

*As an immigrant writer who made the dramatic journey from a Yiddish tenement home to a Greenwich Village literary world, Roth himself is situated between languages. Bound to Yiddish emotionally, he is also estranged from it intellectually, having never achieved genuine literacy in that language and having never read Yiddish literature. Yet despite mastery of and inventiveness in his nearly native English, he is estranged from it emotionally, for it has remained in his mind the repository of the Christian world. . . . To discuss *Call It Sleep* as an ethnic novel can be constructive, then, if we discard the notion that ethnicity provides an essential and stable identity in confrontation with a monolithic mainstream culture. Instead, ethnicity itself may be a type of invention.*

— Hana Wirth-Nesher

***Call It Sleep*: Jewish, American, Modernist, Classic**



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